

A · LESSON · IN · LOVE

ELLEN · OLNEY · KIRK



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A LESSON IN LOVE

BY

ELLEN OLNEY KIRK

AUTHOR OF "THE STORY OF MARGARET KENT," "SONS AND DAUGHTERS"
"QUEEN MONEY," ETC.



BOSTON AND NEW YORK
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A LESSON IN LOVE.

AN INTRODUCTION TO A FAIR WIDOW.

AT eleven o'clock on the morning of the 7th of September, 187-, Mr. Thomas Marston stood on the hearth-rug in his office, awaiting the arrival of his client, Mrs. David Warrington. He was a tall, thin man, punctiliously dressed, and tightly buttoned up. His scanty brown hair was touched with gray, as were his very neat and well-trimmed whiskers. He had an ugly, whimsical face, whose habitual expression was one of scornful fastidiousness. His voice was somewhat harsh, and his manner dry and pedantic. He was a confirmed dyspeptic, and in constant fear of taking cold, — perpetually shivering, and looking over his shoulder after a possible draught. He was now sixty-five, and had had a long experience as counselor-at-law, but from middle age had chiefly occupied his time and energies in looking after the interests of David Warrington, a large real-estate owner. At Mr. Warrington's death, which had occurred several years before our story opens, he had been appointed one

1

of the executors of the will, and one of the trustees of the property.

His duties, the performance of which during the old gentleman's life had been a matter of habit and conscience with Mr. Marston, were now of a sacred and even tender nature, involving, besides fidelity, all the delicate feelings which may thrill the heart of an elderly bachelor. The widow was a young and very beautiful woman; and her cordial reliance upon his sagacity made it all the harder to bear the ordeal which now loomed before him of confessing that there had been all along a flaw in his clear-sightedness, that his legal acumen was questionable, and his financial scheming futile. Two days before, the news had come like a thunderbolt upon the old lawyer, that grave doubts had arisen concerning his client's title to certain portions of valuable real estate. It had given him a very palpable shock. He had taken the alarm at once, sent for Dr. Alan Ford, his co-trustee, then telegraphed to Mrs. Warrington, who was at her place in the country.

It was a trifle past eleven when Mr. Marston, peering from the window, caught sight of a carriage stopping before the door, and withdrew to assume once more an indifferent position before the empty grate. The moment the wheels touched the curbstone, one of his clerks, posted for that purpose, rushed out, opened the door, assisted the lady to alight, led her across the pavement, then ushered her up stairs, and into the private room. Mr. Marston's features lighted up when she entered: two things in the visible world

gave him actual satisfaction, — the sight of a fire and of Mrs. David Warrington. She came in smiling, extending her hand in a slow, luxurious way, her soft, luminous eyes resting upon the old lawyer, then wandering about the office.

“I am glad to see you, madam,” said Mr. Marston with dry precision. “I have been waiting for you twenty minutes, and in a matter of such importance” —

“Dear Mr. Marston, Dr. Ford says he doubts whether” —

“In a matter involving such tremendous issues, madam,” pursued the lawyer, who bore Dr. Ford a distinct grudge, and would not allow himself to be interrupted by any of his opinions, “delays are dangerous.”

“You asked me to come at eleven,” said Mrs. Warrington; “and I now see by your clock that it is but ten minutes past.”

“The clock is slow,” ejaculated Mr. Marston testily, then consulted his own watch, which he discovered to be lagging ten minutes behind. He thrust it into his pocket, pursed up his lips, shook his head, and began rubbing the back of his neck.

Mrs. Warrington had seated herself in one of the large green-morocco-covered chairs which flanked the table, and now looked up at the lawyer with a candid air. With a view to private felicity she would never have sought Mr. Marston, but had long since made up her mind to accept his petty solemnities of self-importance as she accepted the other burdens of life which promised her compensation.

"I am so sorry to have kept you waiting!" she said, conceding the point with perfect good humor. "Dr. Ford came up last evening, and I decided to come to town with him at nine o'clock to-day."

"Ah!" exclaimed Mr. Marston with forcible displeasure. "I told Dr. Ford distinctly that I preferred to acquaint you with the story myself."

"He told me very little."

"He came to town with you?"

"Certainly."

"Will he follow you here?"

"Oh, no!"

Mr. Marston betrayed visible relief. There was a virtue in Dr. Ford's absence he could never find in his presence.

"What did he say about this action of ejectment?"

"He merely gave the general facts. Of course he could not pretend to take a legal view of Mr. Gordon's claim; but, regarded sensibly, he thinks" —

Mr. Marston waved his hand in rejection of any claims of the young doctor's gratuitous common sense.

"Dr. Ford is always talking about the way a subject looks to him," he snarled, "and of taking a reasonable view of matters in general: *I* talk about the existence of facts in law." He went across to the table, and took up a bundle of papers over which he had worked for the last thirty-six hours. "I will fully explain the aspects of the case, so far as developed," said he, advancing towards Mrs. Warrington. "There is nothing like understanding a subject from the beginning"

Mrs. Warrington had heard these words before, and

shuddered as he came towards her, looking at her over his glasses. Midway on the rug he stopped short, shivered, glanced back, and glared angrily at the window open to the sultry hushed September air.

"I will first make the Gordon genealogy clear to you," said he. "The claim upon your property comes from the descendants of Robert Lennox Gordon, who died in 1798, and endowed St. Pentecost's Church. He had two sons, James Lennox and Philip Gordon. James Lennox Gordon was first rector of St. Pentecost's, and died without issue in 1799. Philip Gordon had two sons, one of whom lived to inherit the estate. This latter, Philip Lennox Gordon, had one son, Robert Lennox, born July 5, 1803. We have here the plaintiff in the suit brought against you."

"Yes," said Mrs. Warrington, "Alan Ford tells me that the property was left to St. Pentecost's Church under certain conditions which have not been fulfilled, and that, by the terms of the will, the lands revert to the heirs-at-law."

Mr. Marston frowned, and looked annoyed.

"I am coming to that, madam ; I am coming to that. Robert Lennox Gordon died Oct. 12, 1798, and by his will gave to the parish of St. Pentecost's the church, parsonage, schoolhouse, and all the lands lying within an eighth of a mile in each direction from the graveyard. This demesne was formally surveyed, and the boundaries fixed : it was to be used strictly for church purposes,—a perpetual benefice and an inviolable glebe."

"I understand," interrupted Mrs. Warrington, with

the shallowness of her sex going straight to the point. "At that time St. Pentecost's was far out of town; but, as city limits extended, the parish began to see that the glebe was to become the very heart of New York, and that it would be profitable to sell this land for building-lots, and fund the money. Mr. Warrington bought them, all but a half-dozen or so, thirty-two years ago. He was in the habit of saying that it was the best investment he had ever made, although he paid the church the full price asked."

"I was coming to that, madam," said Mr. Marston, not enjoying the sight of the ball in the hands of another. "We had not quite reached those points. In matters of this importance, precision of thought and nicety of expression are, above all things, essential."

"Please go on. I will interrupt no more."

The lawyer nodded stiffly, looked at his notes, but had lost his plan, and had, besides, been bewildered by this over-hasty recital. Mrs. Warrington leaned back in her chair, and heard, as in a dream, his account of the Gordon will, codicils, deeds, and the history of St. Pentecost's parish-lands. He was dry, but accurate and faithful; and it was his boast that he never willingly allowed any client of his to run away with silly conceits and half-digested ideas. When she once more compelled herself to listen, he was saying, —

"Dr. Ford, who has only the most superficial insight into the bearings of the case, may consider my alarms groundless; but they are not so. Mr. Gordon, the plaintiff, or, more probably, Decker & Shairp, his attorneys, have discovered papers which throw light on

every doubtful clause of the will. There is a memorandum in Robert Lennox Gordon's own handwriting, — a mere memorandum, yet signed and witnessed, — in which he clearly affirms and re-affirms his wishes. Unless the lands are inconvertibly held as church-property, *they shall revert to his heirs*. Birckhead, who is lawyer for St. Pentecost's, showed me a copy of the document. 'Tis as plain as a, b, c."

"They had no right to sell the land to Mr. Warrington?"

"No church has any business to convey real estate without special decree of court. St. Pentecost's had already vitiated its title by letting and sub-letting these lots which your husband afterwards bought. It seems the strangest piece of folly for Mr. Warrington to have purchased them without warranty. Heaven and earth!" cried Mr. Marston, raising his hands, and infusing into his exclamation all the solemnity which the words are capable of expressing, — "heaven and earth! how a man of his sagacity, his experience, his safe, systematic business habits, could have gone about buying any sort of city lots without a clear warranty of title, passes my comprehension."

"Suppose he had a warranty of title, what then? If the suit goes against us, will St. Pentecost's be liable for the value of the property?"

Mr. Marston pursed up his lips, frowned, stalked up to Mrs. Warrington, then, with shaking and impressive forefinger, answered in a whisper, —

"With an assured title, the church might, I say *might*, madam, be liable for the amount paid for the

property thirty years ago, but not for its present value. Liable for its value? Good heavens!" exclaimed Mr. Marston in the wildest excitement. "You know, madam, what the assessed value of that estate is! You have some notion of the income it affords you! I then implore you to consider the magnitude of the interests involved. Every step of the proceedings will raise some of the very nicest questions in law. . . . I can do nothing for you here. What you imperatively require is the services of the most acute lawyer in town."

"Of course I shall be wholly guided by your judgment of what is best for me," said Mrs. Warrington, stretching out her hand. "I told Dr. Ford that all I would do, or could do, was to give you the very fullest power to act for me; that I should, without reservation, act by your advice."

Mr. Marston accepted the hand in a distant, guarded fashion, outwardly discontented, but inwardly elated that Dr. Ford was not the counsellor to trust—in this emergency.

"Then, my dear Mrs. Warrington," he said with sudden expansiveness, "then, without further discussion, we will ask John Truax to conduct our case."

"John Truax?"

"John Truax."

"And who is John Truax?"

"Can it be that you have never heard of John Truax?"

"Never."

"Nor of the Langham will case?"

"Oh, yes! we have all heard of that. And it was managed by this John Truax?"

"Most assuredly it was. It will cost us money to engage him, but our title must be maintained at any cost. There may be delays; and we want a young man and a strong man, who can endure delays. Decker & Shairp are always ready to appeal a case up to the very bar of heaven. You consent to have Truax?"

"I know nothing whatever about it," returned Mrs. Warrington, who began to show signs of fatigue. "I told you I confided fully in your judgment. If you want John Truax, or any other lawyer, engage him, by all means."

Mr. Marston breathed freely for the first time since he had heard of the suit pending. Within certain limits, and according to prescribed routines, he was an excellent lawyer, slow, plodding, but sure. He lacked, however, fertility of resource, and, deprived of precedents, had no clear vision.

"I will send for Truax at once," said he, rubbing and twisting his hands, and regarding Mrs. Warrington with a sort of proud satisfaction. "I was afraid he might be retained on the other side: accordingly I stepped over and spoke to him on the subject yesterday. He was interested in the case, and saw its bearings at once. No lawyer of our day has more ability in mastering his facts, besides wonderful skill in presenting them to judge and jury. He has rarely lost a suit."

"Then, he seems just the man for us," said Mrs.

Warrington, to whom this prodigy of a lawyer promised only a fresh weariness. She half rose. "Since you are sending for him, Mr. Marston, you will not need me."

"Oh, stay and see him, by all means, dear madam ! He is, I confess, no ladies' man, but rather, at least in the estimation of some people, a bear, and a very imperfectly tamed one at that. His manners at times are " — Mr. Marston gave a complacent smirk, and shrugged his shoulders. "Still, he will insist on seeing you sooner or later, and as you will be in the country " —

Mrs. Warrington sat down again, listlessly consenting to meet her counsel ; and, while Mr. Marston despatched one of his clerks down the street, she leaned back in her chair, and gazed at the ceiling. Life at its best was a little tedious to the young widow. The prospect of a loss of property inspired her with a weary disgust : still, the idea occurred to her, that, if the principal part of her husband's estate were to be swept away, the necessity would also vanish for these periodical interviews with the pedantic old lawyer, with his dyspeptic airs and his elaboration of unimportant details. She was not, however, one of those women who easily betray their feelings ; and when Mr. Marston returned she met him with her usual smile. As for him, now that personal responsibility was at an end, he felt free to entertain his visitor. He lost his frown, his eyes grew moist, he smiled, he almost minced his steps as he walked, and many an old-time grace returned to his manner. Since Mr. Warring

ton's death, it had seemed to him not impossible that time and circumstance should circle to certain results. He believed himself a suitable second husband for the fair widow, but had impressed upon himself the necessity of not startling her by premature disclosure of his hopes. He had been very circumspect, as tender as a dove, but sagacious as a serpent, and discreet as a father-confessor. The occasion now seemed, however, peculiarly propitious for lover-like advances. Yet, in spite of his engaging manner, the circle of earthly sympathies is so incomplete, that Mrs. Warrington found him unusually dreary, and wondered with increasing impatience when the signal of her release would come.

"There he is!" Mr. Marston finally exclaimed. "I hope, dear madam, you will show some little condescension, er — er. Let me assure you, John Truax is by far too big a man to run about town to see his clients. In this case nice customs courtesy to great queens."

"He is very good," drawled Mrs. Warrington, half rising.

"Ah, Truax!" said Mr. Marston, with some elated consciousness of having been found *aux petits soins* with a beautiful young woman alone in his private room. "There you are. Thank you for such promptness. Let me introduce you to Mrs. Warrington. My client realizes your goodness in" —

"I am very glad to wait upon Mrs. Warrington," Truax rejoined curtly. "She does me great honor to request my services."

She had by this time met his eyes. She smiled and blushed, and, after a momentary irresolution, extended her hand. He grasped it with a friendly strength, and gazed at her with frank interest.

He was a man of thirty-six, but looked older. He was tall, but a slight stoop gave a pose to his head which took away from his height. His face was clean-shaven, pale, even haggard. His eyes were deep-set and brilliant. The mouth was his most expressive feature, and showed humor in the curves of the thin, well-cut lips.

His look raised more self-consciousness in Mrs. Warrington than she had ever felt in her life.

"I know very little about my case," she remarked with some constraint; "but Mr. Marston says that we have pressing need of you."

"I am quite sure you did not want me of your own accord. What has Marston been about to let you get into this trouble?" said Truax with a lazy laugh.

"I assure you, I do assure you," returned the old lawyer with a painstaking air, "that I am in no respect in fault. Mr. Warrington made the investment two years before he ever entered my office. I had absolutely nothing to do with the business."

"I haven't looked into the case yet."

"I am better posted in the facts than I was yesterday, Truax," put in Mr. Marston, taking up his bundle of papers. "With Mrs. Warrington's permission I will just run over the principal" —

"By no means, by no means," interposed Truax vigorously. "You know I never go in for that sort

of thing. I can't afford the time. I'll send Jasper over to you : he has a head for details."

He sat down opposite Mrs. Warrington, regarding both herself and her dress with cool scrutiny. He had a keen relish for feminine beauty, and his new client possessed beauty of an uncommon type. Her face was fair, but not dazzlingly fair ; and the tone of the whole was too harmonious to be superficially striking. Her eyes were gray or blue, their expression enhanced by the shade of thick dark lashes. Her forehead was of ideal loveliness, the brown hair growing away from it in a way which displayed the fulness of brow and temples. Her mouth gave eloquence to the whole face, the lips were so expressive in their luxurious curves. Her whole presence interpreted her to Truax as a woman possessing not only beauty, but a high finish of elegance. She had, besides, been embarrassed under his glance at first ; and this embarrassment had been her crowning charm, lending peculiar worth to the dignity with which she presently re-asserted herself, and looked at him with a direct, unshrinking gaze. He was a man with habits of close observation, although he pretended never to notice details. He approved her dress, wondering vaguely if she wore black because she was in mourning ; then, assuming the easy air of authority of one whose least questions are always answered, he inquired, —

" May I ask how long you have been a widow, Mrs. Warrington ? "

" Almost four years."

" Have you children ? "

"Two, — a boy and a girl.

"Of what age?"

"Maud is five. David is just past three years."

"He was born, then, after your husband's death?"

"Six months after."

"You were married how long?"

"Not quite four years."

"You are not yet thirty?"

"I am twenty-seven. I was married at nineteen."

Truax liked the way she answered his questions. He had hitherto been grave, but now relaxed his gravity, and smiled. His face, when thus lighted up, grew boyish, and he was actually handsome.

"You must think me impertinent," said he drolly.

"Not at all."

"Then, you are an ideal client, and I will do my best for you. I will go into the case at once, and you shall hear from me."

Mrs. Warrington rose with her tranquil, commanding air, and took her leave. Both men escorted her to her carriage, then stood together on the pavement, looking after her as she drove away.

"A most uncommon woman, Truax," said Mr. Marston, with unmistakable emphasis.

"Uncommon for a widow. She has the blush of a young girl. How happened she at nineteen to marry an old man like Warrington?"

Mr. Marston frowned.

"What more sensible match could she have made?" said he, with an air of settling the question. "A safe, an excellent marriage for any young woman to make."

"Oh, no doubt! Still, with her beauty, she might have gone in for pleasure instead of safety. Old Warrington was past seventy when he died, was he not?"

"He made her a most admirable husband," asseverated Mr. Marston with some heat.

"I am glad to hear it. Who was she? What was she?"

"Her name was Katharine Eliot. She was a penniless orphan, the daughter of Frederick Eliot, a bankrupt merchant. David Warrington was the young girl's guardian, and she lived in his house from the time she was fourteen. He did every thing for her."

"Oh, that explains it! I always thought it a good notion to adopt a wife early, and bring her up by hand. She looks like a docile creature. Who takes care of her property? Are you one of the trustees?"

"I am one of the trustees, also one of the executors," returned Mr. Marston stiffly.

"And the others?"

"Only Dr. Ford, — a young man, quite a young man, a cousin of David Warrington's, a" —

"Oh, I know Ford! A capital fellow! Good heavens! you don't mean to say that he has this bewitching widow on hand?"

"On hand, on hand? I don't understand you, Truax. He is, to be sure, guardian of her children, and their physician, and, I believe" —

"Of course he is in love with her."

"The young man is not so presumptuous, I should hope."

"A very dull fellow if he is not in love with her," retorted Truax, laughing. "She may not be in love with him. Let us pray that her affections are disengaged. Good-day, Marston. I'll send Jasper over to you."

Mr. Marston went back to his room, fuming over Truax's words and the ideas they suggested. Truax with hasty strides crossed the crowded street, turned the corner, and reached his own office. Looking about as he went in, he asked, —

"Where is Mr. Jasper?"

"Gone out to lunch, sir," one of the clerks replied.

"I should like to see him when he returns," said the lawyer, and, passing into his private rooms, went to his desk, and had filled a long sheet with closely-written notes before his junior appeared. Until within a few months Jasper had been merely a confidential clerk; but, upon the death of the senior partner, he had been taken into the firm. He prepared briefs and summaries for Truax, and drew up under his dictation, or from his inspiration, many important papers.

The young man now received his instructions, and was not slow to remark a certain air of elation in the other.

"Have you got that decision?" he inquired eagerly.

"Why, no! We can't hear for a week yet. Why do you ask?"

"You seem in capital spirits."

Truax threw back his head, and laughed aloud.

"But I've got a new client," he said.

"Is that any thing surprising?"

"But this is a woman."

"Well, I don't see any thing unusual about that."

"She is unusual, I assure you. She is simply superb."

Jasper stared, and went about his business. Truax was left alone ; but, whatever his morning's experience had been to him, he made no pauses to reflect upon his client, and worked straight on until dinner-time.

A CHANCE ENCOUNTER.

AS we have already heard, St. Pentecost's, at the time of its endowment, in 1798, had been a country church close by the summer residence of the Gordon family. As the century advanced, it grew gradually to be a doubtful tradition that the structure of gray stone had been built on the corner of "Gordon's Wood," and that wild animals used in old times to peer out of their forest fastnesses at the sound of the weekly anthems. Nowadays St. Pentecost's is a slow, dull, almost forgotten church in the very heart of the great city which long since swallowed it up. A few faithful old families still attend its services for the sake of the vanished generations whose names are to be found on the gravestones in the churchyard. It is a very dull old church, neither high nor evangelical, neither broad with active sympathies and rationalistic leanings, nor ritualistic with limping Roman tendencies. It is simply old-fashioned, yet holds a certain position on account of its age, its aristocratic traditions, and its present wealth. The "Gordon benefice," from which flowed this wonderful ecclesiastical prosperity, and which allowed clergy and vestry to do so much for their charities, had been for generations almost forgotten, and its benefits accepted like other good gifts which come without the asking.

One day in September, just following the events in the first chapter, the sexton of St. Pentecost's, while engaged in his weekly cleaning, was called upon to admit a party of three, — an old gentleman, a slender young girl, and a middle-aged, professional-looking man. The sexton was surly and consequential, as sextons of rich churches are apt to be, and at first found arguments for refusing.

"I will make it worth your while," said the middle-aged, professional-looking man, nodding shrewdly; and the sexton seemed so little disposed to resent this low estimate of his objections, that he at once took a key from his pocket, and opened the iron gate, standing aside deferentially while the three passed him. They entered the body of the church, where slant dusty sunbeams streamed down through the rose-light in the organ-loft, and, walking up the aisle, turned into the transept, where they paused before a great memorial window.

"A casement high and triple-arched,
All garlanded with carven imageries
Of fruits and flowers, and bunches of knot-grass,
And diamonded with panes of quaint device
Innumerable of stains and splendid dyes,
As are the tiger-moth's deep-damasked wings;
And in the midst, 'mong thousand heraldries,
And twilight saints, and dim emblazonings,
A shielded scutcheon blushed with blood of queens and
kings."

The two men had removed their hats. The younger one, who had feed the sexton, glanced up once in a

business-like way, then stared curiously around the dingy church. The elder, on the contrary, made his obeisance as before a shrine, then stood looking up his face quivering with emotion. He was old, and bore about him many of the failings and infirmities of greater age than he actually possessed. His eyes were bright, but his mouth had a feeble curve ; there was a little tremulous movement of his head ; and his hands shook. The young girl beside him also gazed up at the stained-glass window, with an air of almost passionate exaltation. She appeared to be little more than a child, and had scant beauty as yet, save in her eyes, which were long, dark, and almond-shaped, the brow and lashes almost black, and in striking contrast to her pale skin and golden hair.

"You see the coat-of-arms, Doris," said the old man tremulously. "You would know that anywhere."

"Oh, yes, grandpa ! and the Lennox quarterings."

"That window was brought out from Amsterdam the year I was born, — four years after his death."

"And he was my great-grandfather?"

"A good deal farther off than that. There are four generations between him and you, Miss Gordon," interposed the third of the group. "Here is his tablet in the chancel. I suppose you don't understand Latin."

Doris followed him back along the transept, ascended the chancel-steps, and looked at the marble tablet.

"Read it, Doris," said the old man in his broken, plaintive way. "I have forgotten it."

The young girl began to read it in Latin.

"Translate it, child : my ear no longer catches the meaning."

"'Sacred to the memory of Robert Lennox Gordon,' " Doris began again in her soft, clear voice, "'son of Robert Gordon and Elizabeth Lennox his wife, who departed this life Oct. 12, 1798, in the eighty-seventh year of his age. Piety to God, devotion to his country, benevolence to his fellow-creatures, occupied his thoughts, and directed his endeavors. In public life he was the friend of Washington and Franklin : in private he was a tender husband, a wise father, a faithful master. Actuated by a vital faith in the worth of true religion, he was the propagator of his hereditary faith, and the founder and endower of this church. His bounties through life were dispensed with liberal but unostentatious munificence ; and he bequeathed to this parish of St. Pentecost's a considerable portion of his wealth, the recollection of his beneficence, the example of his virtues, and the fulfilment of his testament.' "

Mr. Decker was copying the inscription in his notebook.

"*The fulfilment of his testament,*" he repeated significantly. "That is important to remember, Miss Gordon."

"Yes," Doris replied briefly. Her pale cheeks had gained color, and her eyes burned with excitement.

"Nothing can be clearer," pursued the lawyer. "According to the terms of the will, every foot of ground bequeathed by Robert Lennox Gordon ought to be in the possession of St. Pentecost's to-day."

"But in that case," said the young girl, laughing a little, "where would be your lawsuit, Mr. Decker?"

"True enough. Very well said. Their trespass makes our right. And Mrs. Warrington's property in real estate is estimated to be worth at least several millions of dollars." He chuckled audibly.

The old man turned fretfully, and regarded Mr. Decker with displeasure. Eager as he was about the lawsuit, he could not endure any intrusion of worldly thoughts into this place.

"There are tablets to the memory of the Gordons all over the church," he said in a soft, melancholy tone. "When I used to sit in that old pew as a boy, I thought to myself I would never be buried in St. Pentecost's graveyard, and have my name in black letters on the wall here. Now it seems to me I could not rest quietly anywhere else. Look to it, Doris, that I am buried outside. Look to it."

"Don't, dear grandpa, don't," said Doris, touching his shoulder, and looking in his face. "Think, instead, of the good fortune which is coming back to you."

"I do, I do. For years I could not bear to come to this place, and face the old names and the old recollections. They are all here,—my father, my mother, all of them. It seems to me sometimes in my dreams that they are groaning and sobbing in their graves to think how low the Gordons have fallen. I have not been here since your father died, Doris,—fifteen years ago."

They left the dim chancel, and passed down the aisle to the great pew where vanished generations of

Gordons had knelt, and uttered the prayers whose answer had made the weal or woe of their almost forgotten lives.

"It is not that I want wealth again for myself," Mr. Gordon exclaimed, pausing there for a moment. "But to think I have had it and lost it; that every thing is over with me; that the Gordons are no longer any thing or anybody. I can remember my father's sitting there, and putting his note of hand for a thousand dollars on the plate; and there was my mother in velvet and lace, and my sisters." He turned, and looked down at his grandchild. "They wouldn't have believed a Gordon could wear any thing like the frock you have on, Doris," he said grimly.

Doris shook her head.

"I am a Gordon all the same," said she. "They need not be ashamed of me."

"They won't be ashamed of you, Doris. You shall walk in silk attire yet. Perhaps—who knows?—you will come back here some day to be married: all the family have been married here. All the Gordons, men and women, have taken their vows on those steps."

Doris looked back wistfully, wishing the old pageants might renew themselves, and that she could see the soft splendors of a marriage-procession.

"I should like to be married here," she said very gravely yet eagerly. "I will be married here."

"So you shall," put in Mr. Decker, with an air of gallantry which displeased Mr. Gordon's old-fashioned notions of proper deference. He led the way out of the church without a glance behind him.

"Where is your grand-daughter?" asked Mr. Decker when they emerged, and found that Doris had loitered behind them.

"She will be here presently, no doubt," Mr. Gordon returned in his most stately way. The two stood looking about at the moss-covered gravestones with which the ground was paved. Here and there towered a monument of recent date, but in the main the sleepers slept their long sleep with nothing but a gray slab to mark their resting-place. Outside the enclosure went on the turmoil of one of the city thoroughfares; inside the equinoctial gales were blowing, and the yew-trees on the right answered the monotonous melancholy refrain of the fir-trees on the left. Even the business-like lawyer was impressed with sombre reflections, and entered into the old man's thoughts, if not from sympathy, by virtue of a common humanity.

Hearing a footstep behind, he turned, and saw some one entering the church.

"That is John Truax," he remarked to Mr. Gordon; then, smitten with a fresh thought, added sharply, "I wonder if it is possible that he is to have any thing to do with the defence." He paused a moment, and turned the matter over in his mind. "After all," he went on, "it would show that they were considerably afraid of us."

John Truax passed on, removing his hat as the sexton obsequiously opened the inner door for him. He had come in to read the tablets, and mark certain dates in his mind. As he approached the chan-

cel, he saw Doris kneeling there. "Sunshine in the shady place," said he at sight of her golden curls; for John Truax was apt at quotation.

She rose from her knees presently. "Did I keep you, grandpa?" she asked, in her soft, childish way; then, discerning her mistake, and meeting Truax's eyes, she murmured, "O sir! I beg your pardon."

He had wondered, while she knelt, if she were a child or a woman, but now made up his mind that she could be little more than twelve or thirteen, in spite of her tall, slender shape. She wore a gray dress scantily made, and so short that it disclosed both feet and ankles; then her air of shyness and deprecation was distinctly childish.

"I hope, my dear," said he, "that I did not disturb your prayers."

"Oh, no, sir!"

"Do you often come here to offer your petitions?"

"I never was here, sir, before, in all my life."

"Queer old church!"

"There is no church in the whole wide world I could love so well."

"Oh! that is it. This is a pilgrimage."

"A sort of pilgrimage."

Truax smiled at her. He had half a mind to find out what she had been praying for.

"I hope your prayer may be answered," said he.

"I hope so," she returned, smiling brightly. "And I think it will be, because God is just; and, if it is answered, I shall be the happiest person in the world."

“Heaven grant it, then, my good little girl ! Heaven grant your prayer, and bring all you wish for to pass !”

She looked at him, and seemed on the point of saying something more, but checked herself, and went slowly down the aisle. Half way to the door she turned, saw that he was still watching her, and smiled and nodded, giving him a last keen glance out of the corners of her long, dark eyes.

A SIN OF OMISSION.

OVER and above Mr. Thomas Marston, Mrs. David Warrington had a trustee and adviser, who possessed almost every claim to her confidence. This was Dr. Alan Ford, a second-cousin of her late husband's, his physician, the physician of her children, and their guardian as well. He was a young man, little past thirty, who, without extraordinary claims of intellect or good looks, had contrived to secure a very fair place in the world. The absence of brilliant parts was atoned for by a quiet strength and consistency which never disappointed his friends. He had been a great favorite with the late David Warrington, — so great a favorite, indeed, that the old man had said to him a week before his death, "Alan, it is borne in upon me that you will be Katharine's second husband — and I — I wish it to be so." This circumstance was not known to the world ; but the doctor had, nevertheless, been long ago selected as a suitable match for the young widow. Indeed, it required no unusual powers of prediction to forecast the result of the intimacy which subsisted between the two. Dr. Ford was always to be seen ringing Mrs. Warrington's door-bell at half-past nine o'clock in the morning while she was in town ; and during her stay in the country few days passed without his making his

appearance there. The delicate health of the little boy was, so people declared, only a graceful form of excuse. No one except Mr. Marston was interested in arguing the contrary : so it was generally conceded, without begrudging either such special good fortune, that Katharine Warrington and Alan Ford were sure to marry sooner or later. Perhaps no one felt so certain of this as the young doctor himself ; and there was a certain breadth in his estimation of his duties to the widow and her children which would hardly have been possible on any terms save his counting assuredly on the very highest reward.

One evening towards the middle of October, Dr. Ford had made one of a dinner party of nine at Mrs. Warrington's town house, 16 — Square. He was called away at dessert ; and when he felt free to return to the drawing-room found the other guests dispersed. Katharine was still there, sitting alone before the fire. Alan did not at once make his presence known, but stood at the door, regarding her in silence. She had thrown herself into an arm-chair, and leaned her head back against the cushions : her foot, escaping from the folds of her dress, showed by its nervous patting that she was not resting, but had closed her eyes only the more wholly to surrender herself to thought.

"Here I am, Kate," said Alan at last. "At least wake up and say good-night to me."

She opened her eyes, and half turned.

"Oh ! is it you, Alan ? Where were you ? I thought every one had gone."

He advanced, laughing slightly.

"You had not missed me?" But her look of indifference warned him not to wait for an answer. "I have been up stairs with little Davy," he explained. "Your aunt sent me word at dinner, that he was threatened with croup."

"Poor little fellow! Is he better?"

"I hope so. You ought not to have brought him to town so early, Kate. This climate is too damp for him."

Katharine looked at the doctor, and smiled to herself. He was not a man to be wearisome or dictatorial, but he importuned her a little by his pertinacity about the boy's health.

"I might send him back to the country with his nurse," she proposed.

But this suggestion did not cover the subject for Alan.

"What I cannot understand is, why you should have broken up and come to town so early yourself."

"You know that I was compelled to be here earlier than usual."

"How so?"

"Don't be tiresome, Alan! Have I not a lawsuit on hand?"

"I don't see that it requires your personal attention in the least. I might have managed every detail for you. In fact, that day you came to town with me, in answer to Marston's telegram, you remarked, that, after that one consultation, you should insist on leaving every thing in our hands, never even asking a question until we got a decision."

She made no answer, but averted her eyes. He began to walk restlessly through the long splendid rooms.

"Kate," he resumed, finally coming back to her. "I am puzzled by the change I see in you."

"What change?"

"Usually you put off returning to town until late in November, then come reluctantly."

"I have already remarked, Alan, that I was forced to come earlier this year on account of my lawsuit."

"Well, having come, you have nothing on earth to do about your lawsuit, but set out in a wild career of dinner-giving. This is actually your third party. Usually you give no more than two in the entire season."

"And you have often enough scolded me for want of hospitality. Besides, these are small parties."

"Formerly you were indifferent to dress: now there is no end to your toilets. To-night you are magnificent."

"Do you find any fault with my looks, cousin Alan?"

He shook his head. He did find fault with her whim in coming to town in the middle of September, for her sudden interest in society, and her new French dresses, but was shrewd enough not to commit himself. He had long ago made up his mind that the way to win Katharine was, if not by pleasing her, by never displeasing her.

"Oh, you are superb, Kate!" said he. "I thought at dinner I had never seen you look so well before."

She half sighed, was about to speak, then changed her mind, and continued silent. There could be no doubt but what the dress of white silk and black velvet became her intense, luxurious, but delicate beauty. She was a lovely picture to Alan.

"You seem to have found your party dreary," he remarked.

"The dreariest I ever gave."

"Who was to have had the empty place?"

Katharine leaned down, and adjusted the train of her dress coiled up beside her.

"Mr. Truax," she answered, without looking up.

"On my word, Kate, I wonder that you invite that man again! Did he promise to come?"

"Yes."

"Did he send an excuse?"

"No, nothing. I expected him, or should have asked somebody to fill his place."

"That is his way. Twenty women, first or last, have tried to lure him into society, and have burned rosemary, incense, and laurel before him. He treats them all like this. For Heaven's sake, Katharine, don't make the smallest effort to draw him out of his unsocial habits. You would have no reward. He piques himself on his antagonism to your sex. He has no vanity, and can't be moved that way. The only thing in life he takes seriously is his profession. He will make any sacrifice to advance himself there, and is one-sided enough to succeed. No fancies such as other men have will ever impede his career. He has no more heart than one of the figures on that Chinese screen."

Katharine had listened quietly without looking up.

"How many times have you ever met him?" Alan asked presently, when he found that she had nothing to say.

"Only twice." Katharine was cool enough. "I saw him first at Mr. Marston's office, then afterwards at his own. I have never met him alone. I know very little about him. You are right in your estimate of him, no doubt. It is, however, natural enough that I should invite him here: he is my lawyer. Everybody knows that he is defending enormous interests of mine."

Without seeming to give his questions value, Alan adroitly drew every particular of her two interviews with Truax. When he left her house half an hour later, it was with a startled conviction that the dangers from the impending lawsuit which menaced Katharine were of a kind he had little foreseen. He had distinctly recognized a change in her of late. Her interest in the case had not sufficiently accounted for her restlessness, her apparent desire to put a certain zest into life to which she had hitherto been indifferent. If it should turn out that she had been thinking of Truax, and building hopes upon her future acquaintance with him, Alan was ready to feel tremors of doubt, instead of his usual pleasant certainty that all the chances of winning Katharine were in his own favor.

He went straight to his club upon leaving Mrs. Warrington's, and there encountered the object of his incipient jealousy on the staircase. He was tolerably intimate with Truax, having been his professional adviser through a slight illness of the winter before.

"How are you, doctor?" said the lawyer, putting his hand on Alan's shoulder. "You are out late. I was just going home."

"I only dropped in. I have been to a dinner party."

"So you do that sort of thing!"

"This was a dinner-party at Mrs. Warrington's."

Alan spoke with intention.

Truax began to laugh. "Good Heavens!" he exclaimed, "I meant to have gone to that dinner. I forgot all about it!"

"Not even a ghost sat in your empty place."

"I must apologize," mused Truax. "A dinner-party, -- and I wrote a cordial acceptance. The thing is inexcusable. The fact is, Ford, I did not leave my office until nine o'clock, then came here to dine, without going to my rooms to dress. I put Mrs. Warrington's note in the corner of my glass this morning that I might be sure of remembering it."

The two men went out together, and walked along the streets until their roads separated, talking indifferently. If Alan had not enlightened himself concerning Katharine's feeling for the lawyer, he had, at least, enjoyed the comfort of making up his mind that Truax wasted few thoughts on his lovely client.

A CAPTIVATING CLIENT.

JOHN TRUAX had small conscience in social matters, considering himself in no wise concerned about the turning of tides of the fashionable world ; yet, for two days after Mrs. Warrington's dinner-party, his thoughts reverted with persistence to his neglected invitation. He was a hard-working lawyer, with neither leisure nor inclination to be swayed by social forces, having, in fact, shaped his entire career to a systematic avoidance of beautiful young widows, or whatever else was likely to attract or distract him from his chief purposes in life. But devotion to his fair client in no wise ran counter to the proper direction of his energies ; and he regretted that he had seemed to repulse her overtures towards a better acquaintance. It was in this mood he happened to meet Mrs. Lyon, a cousin of his own, who at once seized him by the arm, and asked why he had not been at Mrs. Warrington's.

"I was quite particularly engaged," he replied. "So you were there ! I had no idea you were acquainted with Mrs. Warrington."

"Not to know Mrs. Warrington would be to argue myself unknown. The odd thing is that you should know her."

"She is a client of mine."

"I am well aware of that," returned Mrs. Lyon. "Don't you know that we are connected with the people who are bringing the suit?"

"Why no. Impossible!"

"You certainly remember that my husband's sister married a Gordon?"

"She died so long ago, I had forgotten her marriage."

"She and her husband both died, but left a little girl, the grand-daughter of Robert Lennox Gordon."

"Lyon ought to give his relations a little good advice. They haven't a leg to stand on."

"So he says. As for me, I shall not disturb myself about the matter yet. I feel sorry for little Doris Gordon, growing up in that dreary place where her grandfather lives. I should not object to her having a dowry out of the Warrington estate."

"Oh, no doubt!"

"Speaking of Mrs. Warrington, I remarked to her that you were my cousin, and asked if she knew you. No, she replied, not in the least. Yet there was your name on the plate next to mine. I told her I had always supposed lawyers and clients to be on the most intimate terms; and she replied very sweetly, that, not being on trial for her life, frequent personal intercourse with her counsel was not essential."

"I suppose she is annoyed with me."

"Oh! I dare say. All women are. I have been in a chronic state of vexation with you for the past ten years. You have tantalized, aggravated, disappointed me, until I often make up my mind to settle down

into steady hatred, and renounce you altogether : but it counts more in my life to have you once a year than to have others every day ; so I keep on, nursing my grievance all the while."

Truax liked his cousin, and her amiable monopolizing impertinence was not unendurable.

"I hate fashionable women !" said he : "I can't spend my time running after them. Besides, if I go into society, I am never left alone to do as I like, but must needs be interfered with."

"That is because you are a lion."

"Oh ! that is it, is it ? Then, it is a good deal like what the Frenchman said about tiger-hunting, — the pleasure of the amusement depends upon whether you hunt the tiger, or the tiger hunts you."

"Hunt the tiger, by all means. Run after Mrs. Warrington. She is not in the least likely to turn about and hunt you."

"I dare say she is too annoyed to look at me on any terms. You know what a bear I am, Jenny. I have been outrageously rude to Mrs. Warrington ; while, all the time, I have a real desire to be on good terms with her. Set your woman's wit to work, and help me to meet her. Invite her to your house, and I will go."

"Nothing is easier. She will be at my house to-night."

"To-night ? At your reception ?"

"Yes. Only promise to come, and I will send a note saying that you are anxious to see her ; that you are coming with the sole idea of getting a quiet talk with her."

"I can say what I have to say in five minutes."

"But you sha'n't."

"I am afraid you will insist on introducing me to people, or making me do something I don't like."

"Come on your own terms."

On this occasion Truax took pains to remember that he had an engagement, and at ten o'clock promptly repaired to the Lyons'. His cousin, to spare him the fruitless task of wandering from room to room, told him at once that Mrs. Warrington had not arrived. Although he had entered society for the purpose of atoning for some of his sins of omission, he had apparently no wish to redeem his credit by undertaking any works of supererogation. He took up his stand behind his hostess, bracing himself in a well-balanced position against the wall, with no intention of being easily moved, and at no pains to disguise the fact that he was awaiting the arrival of a particular person. It followed, that, when Mrs. Warrington entered, his face was the first on which her eyes rested; but she withdrew her glance before it wholly met his. She addressed Mrs. Lyon and the group about her, then walked straight on through the rooms, and sat down on an empty sofa in the library. It suited Truax to be somewhat ostentatious in his zeal to meet his client; and he accordingly followed her through the crowd, and, the moment she sat down, advanced to address her. He looked smiling and eager. He had pronounced her charming at first sight; but now, seeing her in full dress, told himself he had never begun to realize what a really beautiful woman she was.

When Katharine looked up at him, a faint flush crossed her cheeks. Until he received this tribute, it would have been enough merely to bow, now he was emboldened to extend his hand.

"I came expressly to meet you, Mrs. Warrington," said he.

"Mrs. Lyon sent me word that you were to be here," she replied quietly; "but I hardly counted on seeing you."

"Why not?"

"I suppose I doubted your inclination for general society."

"I haven't the faintest inclination for general society. I came to see you, Mrs. Warrington."

She half smiled, and shook her head.

"I came to meet you," he repeated, his emphasis lingering on the final word. "Oh, I see!" he exclaimed, shrugging his shoulders: "you are sceptical, because on four different occasions I have had the surest opportunity of meeting you by accepting your own invitations. Do me the justice to remember that I am a very busy man, Mrs. Warrington."

"When you are not so busy, when you give up your dislike to society and do go out, I wonder how you like it."

"A quarter of an hour ago, when I began to fear that you were never coming, I asked myself with disgust why I had thrown away an entire evening."

"It does seem a pity. And now are you going?"

"No," answered Truax succinctly; then with an appealing look put his hand on her dress, and ven

tured to make room for himself on her sofa. "You asked me," said he, turning so that he could see her face, "how I liked it. I like it."

Katharine remarked, with a successful air of indifference, that he must be easily pleased; for the party seemed an especially dull one.

Truax laughed. "I must try to amuse you," said he.

"There are two kinds of parties," she went on, as if he had not interrupted her,— "the dull and the insupportably dull."

"I am persuaded that this is not the worst evening you have ever spent."

"Certainly not."

"This is only dull, — not insupportably dull."

"I am not over fond of society."

"I had an idea you were a rather gay woman."

"Oh! I go out frequently. What else have I to do? My life is utterly without excitements."

Truax looked closely at her side-face, finding fresh beauty in her all the time. Her chief charm to him was, however, a certain shyness, which veiled her, as it were, forbidding her to meet his open smile or full gaze. He began to wonder if he interested her, or if she were merely tolerating him, and became conscious of a wish to measure more exactly the extent of his influence over her.

"I see," he said, in a soft penetrating voice, lower than that in which he had hitherto spoken, "that it is your way to put excitements into other people's lives. I have deemed it safest to stay away from you."

Mrs. Warrington was no novice, and had heard bolder speeches from men. This, however, so surprised her, that she blushed, then blushed more violently still at her alarmed consciousness that she had been too easily stirred by his words. She could hardly lift her eyes. She felt like a child before him. Truax, meanwhile, found his speech good, and waited to allow its full force to impress her before he uttered a lesser one.

"Do you mind," he asked after a long pause, "if I keep other men away from you?"

"Not in the least. Suppose we finish our conversation."

"I have good intentions that way, I assure you. I have already scowled at six who looked this way. I have a lively sense of what I have lost latterly, and don't intend to forego any present advantage. Still I don't want you to find it monotonous. I once went to a big dinner in the country, where there were three turkeys and three plum-puddings, nothing else."

"Both good in their way."

"Still one likes courses better, doesn't one?"

"I don't want anybody else to come and talk to me, if you mean that," said Katharine candidly.

"I do mean that. There is such a thing as self-sacrifice, and I might resign in favor of a different man if you insisted. I noticed a good many charming young fellows before you came in. They are in society all the time, and know how to amuse a woman. Now, I am never in society, and have no idea how to do it."

"Some of these charming young men do amuse me very much."

"No doubt theirs is a talent worth cultivating."

"I don't call it a talent, but a vice ; something to abstain from, if possible."

"But it is not so easy to abstain from weakness," said Truax, every moment more and more diverted, and now highly elated by her implied compliment to himself. "Men are not always masters of themselves. At this moment, although I have not touched a drop of wine to-day, I feel a little intoxication."

She looked at him, smiling, yet with a serious air.

"It does not suit you to come into society," said she.

"Exactly. It was safer for me to stay away. Do you dance?" he asked presently.

"I have never danced since my marriage."

"I was certain you did not dance, although I can imagine you moving through a minuet or a polonaise. I was looking at the waltzers before you came in. I was in a savage mood, feeling cruelly used by your tardiness. It occurred to me that men and women were droll puppets, and allowed themselves to be moved into extraordinary gambols. I observed that they went through their antics with the utmost seriousness, then, when they stopped, looked at each other, and smiled and smirked with all their might."

"Are you always watching and analyzing people?"

Truax looked slightly confounded, then rallied.

"Don't we all do it? Haven't you been studying me, and trying to make out what manner of man I

am?" He met her eyes with a mischievous glance. "As for me," he continued, "I have no reserves, no Bluebeard secrets, and no warning, 'Into this room you must not try to enter.' I want you to understand me. Let me see: it is now five weeks and three days since I first met you. At the end of the next month you shall know me like your alphabet."

Katharine blushed again; and Truax told himself that the loss of a night's work for the sake of sitting beside a beautiful woman was its own reward. He felt an amused elation, which was always his mood while mastering any thing he had undertaken. He had, indeed, a scandalous love of power, equivalent, perhaps, to the coquetry of a trained woman of the world: to read others, control them, play upon their minds and hearts, had so far in his life been all the good he had looked for in the society of his fellow-creatures.

Dr. Ford, however, broke the prolonged interview by insisting that Katharine should go to supper. Truax promised to find her again, but either forgot his intention, or postponed it too long, and did not even see her as she passed him in the hall, leaning on Ford's arm, on her way to her carriage. He was talking with a knot of men; and as she neared him he uttered a sharp cynicism which repelled her.

"How did you like Truax?" Alan asked her. "You talked with him a long time, Kate. He evidently came with the sole purpose of meeting you."

Katharine answered, with some constraint, —

"Oh! I liked him very well."

"Don't fall in love with him!" exclaimed Alan, touching the gloved fingers on his arm. "He is not a safe man for a woman to fall in love with. Such a passion would bring you to grief."

He put her in the carriage: she looked out the window, and bade him good-night, showing no sign of feeling at his incautious words. The door was shut; and the coachman started his horses, moved three paces along the pavement, but stopped, finding the way blocked. Katharine saw a tall figure on the edge of the curbstone; then a voice called, "Mrs. Warrington!"

She leaned out, recognizing Truax, who came closer.

"I spoke at a venture," said he. "The idea of your going away without a word or look!"

"That is the way we do in society."

"A very heartless way."

"Not at all. Partings don't count when we meet each other all the time."

"Do we meet each other all the time?" said Truax, putting his hand on the window-tassel. "May I go to see you?"

"Certainly."

"When?"

"To-morrow is my regular reception-day."

"Then I sha'n't come to-morrow. Next day?"

"If you do not forget."

Truax was in a mood to promise eternal remembrance; but the horses started once more, and he was compelled to retreat. He walked along the stones, however, with his head uncovered, looking at Katharine until the coachman accelerated his pace, and left the crush of vehicles behind.

TRUAX SEES MRS. WARRINGTON AT HOME.

TRUAX'S promise to call upon Mrs. Warrington had been a mere pretty speech at a time when he was talking in the air, and making pretty speeches. He attached no importance to the matter ; and Katharine had in a measure understood this, and told herself that he was not likely to keep his word.

A week later it came to pass, however, that Truax really wished to see Katharine in order better to explain some circumstances developing in the lawsuit, and involving a question concerning his personal duty. Accordingly he walked straight from his rooms to her house one morning at nine o'clock, rang the bell, and told the man who opened the door that he had come to see Mrs. Warrington on a matter of business.

The servant went up stairs, then in a moment returned. His mistress was almost ready to descend, and begged Mr. Truax to come in and take breakfast. Truax nodded, was ushered into the dining-room, there sat down, and stared frankly about him. The house was richly, even massively furnished, and pleased his taste. The heavy panels, the stamped leather hangings, the ebony furniture, the buffet and sideboard crowded with plate, china, and crystal,—all the varied appointments of the room took his eye. On the walls were three or four pictures of an excellence which no

one could challenge, besides plaques of faïence and enamelled copper. The breakfast-table stood in the centre of the room,—a cool picture framed in the most glowing colors. The door of the conservatory was open, and let in a gush of warm scents and the murmur of a fountain. Over the high mantel-piece hung a portrait of the late David Warrington, a strong yet mild face, with a quiet, rather melancholy gaze down upon the scenes he had lately quitted. Truax looked up at the picture with a grim smile.

“Poor man!” he exclaimed to himself with involuntary pity. “You had to give up a large share of the world’s good things.” Then he added, after Sir Peter Teazle, “When an old bachelor marries a young wife, what is he to expect?”

Presently he turned from his contemplation of the rich apartment silently presided over by the man lately master there, and looked impatiently at the tall ebony clock, whose long gilt pendulum made a continuous flash through the twilight of the corner where it stood.

At the same instant the door opened, and Katharine entered, leading a child by each hand. Truax made one stride, and reached her.

“I am afraid I am taking an unconscionable liberty,” said he. “But Marston is coming to-day, and I wanted half an hour’s speech with you before you saw him. So I ventured to stop on my way to breakfast.”

“You are very welcome,” Katharine returned. “And, now that you are here, you will breakfast with me?”

"I should like to do so. I generally breakfast at my club," returned Truax, regarding her with his brilliant, penetrating glance. Since the night he met her at Mrs. Lyon's party, he had remembered Katharine with a sort of amused disgust, as a beautiful woman who had inspired him to play the part of a fool. He had, however, consoled himself with the reflection that all men talk a vast amount of rubbish between the cradle and the grave, and that he had not done ill to improve his opportunity, and humor the vanity of a desirable client. This morning he felt no disposition to address her in the same strain. Seen against the background of this splendid house, her husband's portrait looking down, her children clinging to her dress, he was inclined to admire her more seriously.

"Do you live all alone?" he inquired with a mixture of brusqueness and *naïveté*, which he used to good advantage when in a mood to indulge his curiosity.

"My aunt, Mrs. Eliot, lives with me,—a dear old lady, whom you shall see presently. She is a little deaf, but it repays one to talk to her."

"Ah! that is the arrangement," said Truax, who had been prepared to learn that the beautiful widow was without a chaperone. "It relieves me to hear that you are well looked after."

Katharine laughed. "I have always been only too much looked after," she returned. "I was never alone a day in my life. As for my aunt, she has been like my own mother ever since I was a little girl of ten. But she does not trust me yet. She thinks me likely to do something frightfully reckless."

"The situation grows piquant."

"Oh, no ! I am a very tame person indeed, as you have already found out. I shall never fulfil my aunt's predictions."

She offered to show him the conservatory while they were waiting for breakfast, and led the way, Maud and Davy still holding her hands. Both children were highly elated at these unusual privileges. Mrs. Warrington was by no means given to sentiment concerning her offspring, but had felt this morning a desire for their support in the interview she both longed for and dreaded. Maud, a brown-haired, brown-eyed, velvet-skinned little girl, ran to a pot of violets, picked two, and, returning, gently pressed them between the visitor's fingers.

"What is this, my little maid?" said he, looking down at her, and smiling. "Do you give the flowers to me?"

Maud, too coquettish to look up, faltered assent. Truax was flattered.

"On my word," he exclaimed, "no child ever made friends with me before. Do you like me, my dear?"

"Yes," whispered Maud, giving him a swiftly-withdrawn glance.

"And why do you like me?"

"Mamma never tells us to come with her when you are not here," cried the little girl artlessly. "Please come every day."

"Since the little ones claim so much," interposed Katharine, "I will introduce them, Mr. Truax. That is Maud, and this is little David. Do you like children?"

Truax made a slight grimace, and shrugged his shoulders.

"On my soul, I don't know," he replied; then, summoning resolution to do the correct thing, with visible effort stooped, and kissed both girl and boy. He was not over-successful. Maud only proffered her cheek, which he considered an evasion of his caress; while little Davy hid his head altogether in his mother's gown. "You see," said Truax in a voice just touched by pique, "they don't fancy me. I know nothing whatever about children: still the sight of them always moves me a little. The only time I ever think of marriage is when I look at their happy faces."

"You want children of your own?"

"Of course. Some day I shall marry, that I may have children of my own. I certainly don't want another man's," he added with a sort of indignation. Then, as Katharine laughed slightly, he inquired, "Why do you laugh, Mrs. Warrington?"

"Shall you marry for no other consideration?" She looked at him, thoroughly at her ease, and smiled. It was the first time she had not suffered constraint in his presence. Now that she received him in her own house, she felt her own dignity more, and he possessed her imagination less.

"What should I marry for?" he asked good-humoredly. "Once or twice, when I have seen a play, I have been carried away by the *rôle* of husband almost to the point of wanting to try it myself. I have longed for a family, and to my great surprise found my mind full of the most charming domestic

ideas ; but the enchantment never lasted until I got outside the theatre."

"Then you were not in love. Your dreams had no foundation, so vanished into thin air."

"Not in love? Exactly. I was not in love. Thank you for doing me the honor of considering me — a hardened lawyer — capable of ever falling in love."

"You don't want to fall in love?"

"I can imagine no experience more charming."

"Or more improbable?"

"Precisely ; nothing more charming or more improbable. I fear it will be a long time before I think of marriage ; but I am, nevertheless, in the habit of looking forward to it as the end of my journey. I doubt if I ever take kindly to the institution. Marriage is necessarily a sacrifice. Everybody who has tried it confesses it is a bondage."

"I am not certain of that," said Katharine, swift to resent what had hitherto been one of the articles of her creed. "From one point of view, any habit might be called a bondage. If one stops to think of the endless monotony of every-day routine" —

"The mere tying of my cravat-ends, for instance," put in Truax, "sometimes stretches before me as an appalling martyrdom, when I reflect that I must expect to go on doing it at least once a day until I die."

Katharine had not finished her sentence.

"When marriage is in the question," she observed, "if husbands and wives love each other" — She broke off ; for Truax was smiling in a way that convicted her of romance.

"You don't believe in any love," she added, growing scarlet.

"Oh, yes ! I believe in love," Truax conceded, with a comical look ; "and if it were only allowable to accept it for what it really is, — an intermittent disease ; first a day of fever, and then a day of chill, — I might go in for it myself. But think of the frightful necessity of keeping one's feelings always at the same temperature."

"You confess yourself to be inconstant."

"I am constant to my own aims. Love and marriage are not among them."

These words fell upon Katharine's ear with the sharpness of a knell. She walked the length of the conservatory between the tall, plummy ferns, trying to command herself, lest Truax should see that he had made her suffer. From her girlhood she had been allowed no wishes and no personal hopes. Life had been a mere matter of breathing, eating, sleeping, and passing the time. At last an impulse had seized her. Why should she not be happy in her own way, like other women ? Her marriage had apparently been a happy one. She had suited Mr. Warrington as a wife ; and, if her tastes on any point differed from his, he died without finding it out. Notwithstanding all this, her aunt, as Katharine had jokingly confessed to Truax, had always claimed to know her better than any one else in the world, and had always watched her with a sort of dread. This presentiment of the old lady's was founded upon an idea that her niece could not always go on governing herself, but would

finally do something unexpected, probably something intensely passionate. Mrs. Eliot might, or might not, be right in her estimate of her niece's capabilities; but of one thing there could be no doubt: Katharine had been profoundly attracted by Truax at first sight; and for the sake of being near him, and having a chance of seeing him occasionally, had established herself in town three months earlier than usual.

This idea, which had controlled her from the moment of meeting him, did not appear audacious or extravagant. From the day of her husband's death she had heard free predictions concerning a second marriage, and now, for the first time, felt an inclination to marry. Truax would naturally fall in love with and marry some woman, and why not herself? Now, when he frankly declared he had no thought of marriage, she seemed to have met a blank denial of her hope, and to have come to the end of every thing. She could not even bring herself to the task of replying to his words, spoken with such good-humored scorn.

The lawyer, meanwhile, was far enough from guessing how Katharine filled up the blanks in his meaning. He would have credited her with utter indifference to romance: in fact, he was every moment investing her more and more with a sort of goddess-like serenity, which hedged her in from the weaknesses of commonplace women. He would no sooner have suspected her of a vain longing for any man's devotion than of coveting some bit of tinsel in a jeweller's shop. She had, it seemed to him, every thing already. Nothing failed her.

Mrs. Eliot, a soft, white, pretty old lady, extremely deaf, stared at Truax all through breakfast, with her mild blue eyes. She had not been slow to observe a change in her niece of late ; and, her mind reverting to the problem of the logical gap between the old Katharine and the new, she plausibly filled it up with this stranger. Since Mr. Warrington's death, Mrs. Eliot had never failed to invest any ordinarily eligible man with whom she came in contact, with at least a momentary halo as the possible second husband of Katharine ; and her tendency to ascribe to her niece a character for impulsive and erratic action made her see a possible danger lurking in every new acquaintance. Truax filled her with a sort of awe. He once or twice addressed her, but in too low a tone to reach her ears.

"I always knew," she said to herself, "that Katharine was certain, first or last, to do something dangerous ; and now she has a chance."

Dr. Ford looked in, as usual, towards ten o'clock ; and a shadow was at once cast on his felicity when he found Truax there quietly eating his morning chop, and drinking his coffee.

"So you have come to claim the place you left vacant the other night," said he.

"Yes. Mrs. Warrington is more lenient than the man who gave the feast in the Gospel," returned Truax.

"That is, she is more lenient to you," said Alan. "You get too many of the good things of this world, Truax."

"I! Indeed, you are altogether mistaken. I was just reflecting upon your advantages, Ford. Now, this is an occasional thing with me, in fact, a unique experience. But you have the air of being free of the house. How often does he come, Mrs. Warrington?"

"He looks in every day to see Davy. Davy is delicate."

Davy was playing on the rug with the greyhound. Truax called the child up to him, and pretended to look him over critically.

"The little man is all right," he affirmed. "But, depend upon it, Ford means he shall be delicate for some time to come. He has no intention of losing his occupation."

"I had you at my mercy once," the doctor remarked.

"I found little enough mercy. — He picked me to the bone, I assure you, Mrs. Warrington. He came to see me every day for two weeks, pretending there was something the matter with my lungs. At the end of that time I was changed to an unrecognizable degree. He is a dangerous fellow: I advise you to avoid him."

Truax rose as he spoke. He had enjoyed his meal, had been entertained by the sight of the pretty woman at the head of the table, and the children playing on the rug; now his thoughts began to be busy with the actual purpose of his visit. "It is a quarter-past ten," said he, looking at his watch. "I have an engagement at eleven, and can spare little more time. Will you give me twenty minutes, Mrs. Warrington?"

Alan caught up his hat, and prepared to take leave. "Hold on, doctor," said the lawyer: "you are almost as much concerned in what I have to say as Mrs. Warrington."

Ford glanced at Katharine, who stood passive. She evidently required no support in the coming interview; and Alan's intentions of supplanting this dangerous rival made it incumbent upon him to play his part with unerring tact.

"I must go to my office," said he with plenty of decision. "I can't wait. — Truax, I bid you good-morning."

Katharine at once led the way from the dining-room to the library; and Truax, closely following, shut the door the moment he entered. His manner had changed. Already he had lost more of his morning than he could well afford, and he was impatient to be on his way down town.

He set a chair for Katharine, and stood before her, regarding her earnestly.

"Now, about this suit the Gordons have brought," said he.

"Yes, I will listen."

"They had a hearing in September, and I asked for some delay. The case required careful looking into."

"And you felt doubtful about the defence?"

"Not at all; but Decker & Shairp had made out a good claim, a very fair claim indeed. So far as the will of old Gordon is concerned, they have a capital case. However, they have slurred over the most important point, which will tell best with the jury.

Philip Gordon was the most active man in the vestry of St. Pentecost's when the church-lots were put on the market, and your husband bought them. Philip Gordon was the father of Robert Lennox Gordon, the present contestant. He and your husband were on intimate terms. I have five witnesses to prove that Philip Gordon urged the sale of the lands, saying that such a sale was fully in accord with the spirit, if not the letter, of his father's will. He was more than once heard to declare that he was the only man who had any thing to say against St. Pentecost's absolute right to part with the property, and that his full consent had been given."

Truax believed that he was speaking with directness, yet Katharine was looking at him as if she failed to grasp his meaning.

"You see," he continued, "the only Gordon heir moved this reversal of the specifications of his father's will. Under his consent, the church acted. In thorough reliance on his faith and the good faith of all the parties concerned, your husband invested his money. Titles were passed, houses were built, whole fortunes were spent by innocent parties who confided in Philip Gordon's honesty of purpose. Now, his son, a bankrupt and a beggar, — a man past seventy, who must have been aware of his father's actions and feelings on this matter thirty years ago, — raises a claim that the lands should be alienated from their rightful owners, and given to himself. I declare it to be an outrage against honesty and law and equity."

He looked at Katharine again, and was puzzled by the expression of her face.

"Do I make myself understood?" he asked brusquely.

She dropped her eyes, blushed slightly, and seemed to be begging his pardon. He wondered how he could have had the brutality to inflict these details upon her, yet told himself with a good conscience, that he had put himself out of his way to come and see her; that he had been spending precious hours for her of late, which were probably wholly wasted; and she ought to understand, that, if he was disagreeable, it was neither by his own wish nor for his own profit. But the sight of her drooping face restrained his impatience; and when he recommenced he took a more gentle and more deliberate tone, as one might in explaining a tedious matter to a well-beloved child.

"I will bore you with no more of these technicalities," he said: "I merely wanted you to understand that I have gone into the case thoroughly, and am prepared to defend your interests. Your title is clear, and should be maintained against every attack. That is a great deal for me to say. I am not given to hasty conclusions in these matters. But" (here he approached more nearly to Katharine, and his extended hand twice touched her shoulder to make his words more emphatic) "while I always do my duty to my clients though the heavens fall, I yet discriminate in favor of the best course open to them. The practice of law is not a mere game of skill. There are two sides to most questions, and points which no statute can reach. Legal justice may be practical injustice."

Katharine was looking at him now.

"I understand how that may be," she said. "For instance, if this property of mine were lost simply because there was no formal warranty of title, it might be legal justice, but practical injustice."

"Very well; yes. Now look at the other side. These Gordons who are contesting your title are very poor. The property was once in their family, and they did all in their power to foster the prosperity of St. Pentecost's Church and parish. The church is now very rich, while its benefactors are almost penniless. There is an old man to whom life has been hard: he has an unmarried daughter past middle age, and a little grand-daughter. They support life on the merest pittance."

"Indeed, I was not aware of this. Where do they live?"

"Down on the seacoast somewhere, in a house, which, having no particular market-value, was settled on the little girl by the creditors at the time of old Gordon's failure."

Katharine looked at him wistfully. "I feel sorry for these Gordons," said she. "What is it you wish me to do?"

"Marston will soon be here to lay a scheme before you for approval. There was a meeting of the different counsel at my office yesterday; and Birckhead, who is the church lawyer, proposed a compromise in favor of these Gordons. St. Pentecost's will pay fifteen thousand if you will pay ten. It is supposed that such an arrangement will put an end to the suit,

and be considerably less expensive than prolonged litigation."

"And you advise me to do this?"

"I advise you to do nothing. 'Tis Marston who will counsel you in the matter. I will, however, say as much as this: such a compromise is likely to save you some suspense and some perplexity. It is a suit which admits of almost endless complications: it bristles with points of which sharp lawyers may make much."

"I will compromise. I will pay twenty thousand dollars if they require it."

"No, don't say that. Marston will teach you better. As for me, I am a lawyer, and believe in law and in abiding by the decisions of the law; and I reject sentiment, and abhor compromise. Still, on that point I have no right to make any suggestions. Wholly to my surprise, I have discovered lately that I am connected with these Gordons. My cousin Mrs. Lyon married the uncle of the little Gordon girl. I will fight for your interests willingly; but, the moment there is a syllable about compromise, my hands are tied at once. Marston understood in a moment, that, as matters stand, I must resign my position as your counsel. I was not willing, however, dear Mrs. Warrington, to hand in my resignation to him. I wanted to give it to you. That explains my visit this morning."

He regarded her gravely. She sat looking at him, her lips parted, her eyes dilated. She had grown very pale.

"It is all over, then," she said.

"Yes, I suppose it is. I fancy there is no doubt about Mr. Gordon's resigning his claim for twenty-five thousand dollars. He is an old man, and, if he wants any new successes, must seize them as they are offered."

"He may not view the matter in that light."

"Should he reject the terms of compromise, I shall be glad to take up the case again."

"You do not, then, mind opposing the Gordons, although they are connected with your family."

"Not in the least. I am not a man of sentiment. I will fight them to the bitter end. I can't, however, have it said I allowed a client of mine to compromise in favor of anybody even remotely connected with me."

They were looking into each other's faces. Truax felt vaguely that Katharine was oppressed by some thought. He waited for her to speak until the silence became painful: so broke it himself.

"I assure you, Mrs. Warrington," he remarked with a brilliant smile, "I experience enormous regret in losing you as a client. Can't you contrive to conjure up some mild shape of peril to your property from a different direction? Otherwise our lives are so far apart, I don't exactly understand how it can ever be my good fortune to get another glimpse of you."

Katharine, still looking at him, flushed deeply.

"Don't go away from me," she exclaimed abruptly.

"Ah! but I must. It would be very sweet to stay—dangerously sweet; but you see destiny has stepped in, and insists on separating us. I frankly regard it

as a cruel blow that I am compelled to give up seeing and knowing you."

"Oh, don't say that!" cried Katharine, ardently stretching out both her hands. "Don't say that! I cannot bear it."

Truax had been growing all the time more perplexed as the interview proceeded, yet held an easy course straight through, determining to show no consciousness of Katharine's agitation. At this appeal, however, he experienced a painful embarrassment. He turned his eyes away: it seemed as if he had been inflicting cruelty, and it was added cruelty to look at her quivering face. He half recoiled, then stole one glance, and could not refrain from advancing nearer. He was strongly moved, and felt the absolute necessity of expressing his feelings by some sign. He seized the outstretched hands in his own: they fluttered and beat against his clasp, but he would not let them go. Katharine knew that she had betrayed herself to a man whose observation was keen and pitiless, and whose heart had not a throb of affection for her.

"Let me go," she whispered with agonized humiliation. "I hear Mr. Marston's voice in the hall. They will let him in here."

For answer Truax bent his head, and kissed first one little hand, and then the other, — one on the palm, the other on the tips of the fingers. He did not look at Katharine again, but went out, blindly running over Mr. Marston in the hall, who stared at him with blank astonishment. At the door he met Mrs. Eliot, who was starting for her banker's on Wall Street, and in-

sisted upon driving Truax to his place of business. He assented, and addressed the old lady with loud and laborious remarks for the entire distance. When he finally reached his office, he found that half a dozen clients were waiting. He admitted no one, however, for the next hour, but sat idle at his desk. Rarely in all his life had he felt so unsettled. What under heaven did it all mean? What could it mean, except that the woman was heart-broken at the severance of the frail tie between them? There was no other key to the enigma. She liked him: she could not bear to lose the chance of meeting him. And what was this but love? Still how could a woman like that—experienced, matured, with all the world at her feet—be so passionately reckless as to fall in love with a man she had seen but four times? He tried to combat the idea, and accused himself of absurd vanity. Yet all the time the possibility that he was beloved, and beloved, too, by a supremely beautiful woman, filled his perceptions like the birth of a new sense.

“What an extraordinary creature she must be!” he exclaimed over and over, more than once uttering the ejaculation aloud.

It was impossible to obtain a satisfactory conclusion on the matter. In spite of his perplexity, there lurked in his consciousness a fine pleasure at the recollection that he had had the grace to kiss Katharine’s hands. He was uninitiated in love-matters, and could hardly have expected that a mere vague instinct of chivalrous feeling would have suggested so delicate a way out of his dilemma. It had shown a fitting sense of her goodness, yet had committed him to nothing.

CONSULTING THE DOCTOR.

TRUAX was not a man of sentiment ; and for that very reason, perhaps, his interview with Mrs. Warrington opened before him unexplored fields of mental activity. All his moods seemed distorted. A certain consciousness of a want of purpose and moral ardor, a blind indifference to what is sweetest and best in life, had been for the first time forced upon him. Not, however, that he was inclined to blame himself where his client was concerned : he only realized, that, in a crisis which ought to have moved emotions at once powerful and tender, he had experienced little save embarrassment. He told himself with exasperation that he had no heart nowadays, that it had died for want of use. He forced himself to define his actual position towards mankind, and the result was a logical but grim conclusion that he loved nobody in the world. He liked a few men, but would not have suffered deeply had they all died. Women counted for little more, in his scheme of creation, than skilfully invented contrivers of torment for idlers among his own sex. When he was twenty-two he had fallen ardently in love with a woman older than himself, who shortly after married another man. This experience had cost him his share of suffering, and had left him some illusions, until, five years later, he met the object

of his early affections, and found his lingering sentiment dispelled as if by magic. He was not slow in mastering his emotions, and had rarely since been disturbed by any ideas of domestic happiness.

He now thought over these things. He would sit in his office-chair, with work before him, and, after a long interval, discover that his whole morning was gone in idle revery. The result of all this was, that Dr. Ford, one day, on going into his waiting-room after dismissing a patient, was startled to find Truax sitting in an arm-chair, reading a medical journal he had picked up from the table. As soon as the doctor entered, he rose, nodded, and followed him stiffly back to his office.

"What's the matter? You surely are not ill!" exclaimed Alan, as soon as the two men sat down face to face.

"That is what you must tell me," retorted Truax with a grim laugh. "Come, I want the opinion of an expert. What is the matter with me?"

"How do you feel?"

"Oh! I feel all right."

Dr. Ford laid two fingers across his pulse, looked at his tongue, sounded him on the chest, and peered into his eyes.

"Oh! you are all right," said he. "Sleep well?"

"Tolerably."

"Eat well?"

"Oh, yes! I don't mind making the confession to you: my private dread is, I am losing my mind."

Alan looked askance at him, amused and inquisitive.

"As to that, I can't give you an off-hand answer," said he. He sat with his elbow on the arm of the office-chair, resting his chin on the palm of his hand, and gazed hard at Truax, who had the full light on his face. "When you allude to such troubles, it becomes a large, deep, and difficult subject; and I don't like to hazard too easy an opinion. You are probably overworked. What are your symptoms?"

"I have no symptoms," declared Truax, then gave a powerful thump with his clinched hand upon his knee. "I find myself inert and apathetic," said he with a comic sort of indignation. "For the first time since I entered my profession, I feel a disinclination for work."

"When you apply yourself, does it seem more perplexing, more intricate, than formerly?"

"Not at all: it simply makes less impression upon me than other thoughts which persist in obtruding themselves."

Alan looked at Truax with quickened intuitions.

"What kind of thoughts?" he asked dryly.

"Oh! all sorts of foolish, abominable doubts whether my life amounts to any thing; whether I am happy, or unhappy; whether I'm turning out the sort of man I meant to be. Heavens only knows what a con-founded ass I am, and what infernal balderdash gets the upper hand of me."

There was a brief silence, then Alan observed, —

"I don't think you're ill, Truax, I don't, indeed. Perhaps something has happened to upset you: some new influence may be at work."

"Nothing of the sort, I assure you!" declared Truax forcibly.

"You probably need a little relaxation. Did you have any vacation this summer?"

"None except half a dozen odd days."

"You can surely command your time sufficiently to take what relaxation you need."

"I went to Saratoga once or twice, but only staid twenty-four hours. I'm not an amphibious animal, and must keep in my own element. Recreation doesn't agree with me. When I try to take a holiday, I am always reminded of the starving Arab who stole what he believed to be a sack of corn. When he opened it to satisfy his hunger, he found it full of pearls instead. Pleasure is of no use to me: I don't know what to do with it."

"I sometimes take it into my head to wonder at you, Truax," said Alan. "It strikes me you don't put much except hard work into your life. Sooner or later a man must relax, or break down. Don't you think of marriage? Don't you feel the need of a wife?"

"Good God, no!" cried Truax. "That man is surely to be pitied whose only hope of escaping the troubles of life lies in marriage. What on earth should I do with a wife?"

"Oh! you'll fall in love some day."

"I hope not: I pray not."

Then came another pause: both men were laughing a little. Alan felt suddenly in capital spirits, but could not get over a little constraint, as he asked,—

"I suppose you will go on with Mrs. Warrington's case?"

"We're waiting to see what they have to say about the compromise."

"But they've rejected it."

"Rejected it! I have heard nothing about it."

"Oh, yes! Old Gordon will compromise for a little matter of two hundred thousand dollars, nothing less."

"That is incredible. Decker is no such fool."

"But his client is."

"I'm almost glad to hear it. I liked the case: it promised some spirited practice, and I shall be glad to proceed. Marston did not say a word about it yesterday."

"He had the news only last night. We dined together at Mrs. Warrington's."

Truax asked, after a little hesitation, —

"How is Mrs. Warrington?"

"Much as usual. You know she is going abroad?"

"Going abroad? What an idea!"

"Yes: she sails within a fortnight, and expects to make a long stay."

Each man sent a hard, square, penetrating glance at the other.

"Ford," said Truax, "you're a foolish fellow to let her go to Europe."

Alan flushed to his hair.

"I don't see any way of hindering it."

"Why don't you marry her?" continued Truax in his pleasantest way. "I should suppose you would take some pains to do so. She is a beautiful creature."

Again they regarded each other steadily.

"You advise it, do you?" said Alan dryly.

"I do," said Truax succinctly, — "I do." He regarded the doctor thoughtfully. "Do you think," he asked, as if absorbed in some speculation on the subject, "do you think she has an actual intention of going abroad?"

"Oh! there can be no doubt of that."

"Has she — has she ever spoken of me?" asked Truax, with a sort of irritation.

"Certainly, many times," returned Alan blandly.

"Oh, indeed!" Truax continued to look at him as if he expected to hear more.

"I can't say that she has been fluent on the subject," Alan pursued; "but she has certainly alluded to you repeatedly."

"In a friendly way?"

"Certainly. Why not?"

"Just so, why not? I certainly put myself out of my way considerably first and last to oblige her."

"I have no doubt but what she appreciates you. Marston was praising you to her last night, and she cheerfully assented."

"Marston may hold his tongue." Truax seemed to be turning over some matter in his mind. "You know her better than I do, Ford," said he.

"I've seen her more frequently perhaps."

"And, besides, you are a born squire of dames, and know what women expect of men. What should you advise me to do? Shall I call upon her before she sails? Will she look for me?"

"Oh, no!" Alan returned briskly. "She is well aware what a busy man you are; and, besides, her own

time will be pretty well taken up: she is obliged to spend a few days at her place in the country."

Truax rose. "Of course, under these circumstances I shouldn't think of calling," said he. "I'll act on your advice, Ford, and leave town myself for a few days."

"Do so, by all means. Go to the seaside. There's nothing like the seaside."

"Yes, I agree with you. I'll go down the coast to an old place where I haven't been since I was a boy."

The two men parted at the door, each in doubt concerning the feelings of the other, and each thinking about Mrs. Warrington. At his office Truax found a message from Mr. Marston relating to the lawsuit *Gordon v. Warrington*, but sent word that he was just upon the point of leaving town for a few days, and that matters must remain as they were until his return. He had rather hastily decided to follow the doctor's advice, and take a trip to the seaside while the fine weather lasted. This little holiday would freshen him, and enable him, besides, to re-adjust his ideas, and decide what course he intended to pursue. The news that Mrs. Warrington was going to Europe had inspired a curious pique and dissatisfaction in his mind. Such an intention put an end, of course, to his pleasant perplexities concerning her feelings for him. It had, to be sure, been a sort of burden to carry the weight of his belief that she was a little infatuated; yet, now that he was forced to tell himself he had been a mere coxcomb, pluming himself on advantages he had

never possessed, he experienced a certain blankness and void. There can be no doubt but what a little sentiment fills up the vacant spaces in a man's life, cheers and stimulates, and offers suggestions of something sweeter than every-day routine. Truax had been saying to himself for a couple of weeks now, "Good heavens, how is such a thing conceivable?" He had wondered while going to bed, what on earth had possessed Mrs. Warrington to care about him; and the problem, still unsolved, had confronted him on awaking. He had mused on the strangeness of his experience while he ate his meals, and wondered at intervals all through the day, if any influence could arouse him from his stagnation and apathy into fiercely matrimonial intentions. It was like a man of moderate wishes hearing with reluctance, almost with disgust, that a great fortune is about to descend to him: he does not want it, and foresees with distinctness all the vexations and loss of freedom its possession will entail. But, for all that, he does not rejoice to learn that the wealth he dreads is going into another man's hands.

Truax's coquettings with the charming notion that he was loved by a beautiful woman had been a little dangerous.

INTO THE ENEMY'S COUNTRY.

THE following morning Truax awoke at Oldinport, a watering-place five miles from Gordon's Point. He had not been on this part of the coast since his father's and mother's time; and he had spent the previous evening walking along the beach in the moonlight, taking stock of his old recollections. He had not found this a pleasing form of relaxation, so ended it by going to bed at nine o'clock in an insufferable mood. A good night's sleep restored him to cheerfulness; and he set out for his walk soon after breakfast, with a feeling that he had a holiday before him. Much of his road lay between the broad salt-meadows on the one hand, and monotonous sand-mounds covered with tufts of coarse grass on the other. He had known every furlong of the path years before, and what an ardent boy learns by heart he never forgets; and, desolate and barren although the prospect was, he now found it full of suggestiveness, even charm. Slowly, with dulled eye and ear, he began to see and hear as of old; and by the time he crossed the "Neck," and reached the promontory, he felt light-hearted. Here the shore grew suddenly bolder, and, climbing up, he gained a view of the wide stretches of sea, the luminous and shifting-hued swell, and sparkling fall of surf below the rocks

which lined the shore. At his right, on top of the ledge, stood a small cottage of rough gray stones, and behind it the waters of the bay lay blue and placid, lazily lapping the sands.

It was all familiar, yet unfamiliar. To the east the point stretched its narrow tongue into the wide and solitary Atlantic ; to the north Cape Ardent raised its head ; while in the near south Cape Violet showed its purple rocks, crowned by a lighthouse. There, too, was the reef stretching across the mouth of the bay, the sea tossing over it, dashing up a line of white and feathery spray. He knew it all : it was the silence and solitude he found unnatural and oppressive. The impetus with which his inclination for change had impelled him to renew old pleasures in old haunts became every moment heightened ; but nothing answered his impatient impulse. The zest he felt would have been in danger of dying out, had not Miss Doris Gordon that moment strolled in sight, with a sober old dog following behind her.

Truax had already enjoyed an accidental encounter with this descendant of the Gordons, against whom he was ready to wage war ; and fate now offered him another. Gordon's Point was indeed the last remnant of the great property from which St. Pentecost's Church had been enriched almost a century before ; and here little Doris had lived since she could remember, and been as poor almost as the poorest. There were but three of the family, — Robert Lennox Gordon, an extravagant-minded and fantastical old man, whose hopes had survived his disappointments, his

daughter Theodora, and this orphan grandchild, the offspring of his only son.

For fifteen years now Mr. Gordon had hidden himself in this place, and groaned over his troubles. It was not alone because he was poor, but because the spectre of what might have been haunted him, whispered to him as he sat or walked, mocked him from the lines of the book he read, followed him to his bed, and scourged him there into an insupportable sense of cruelty and wrong. He resented the narrow household ways which their impoverishment forced upon him: he chafed under their forced economies.

Doris had not, however, been shadowed by the glooms which hung over her home. She had known nothing different, and in spite of Miss Theodora's melancholy cheerfulness and her grandfather's feeble moan against destiny, had found her life a very enjoyable matter, and had no quarrel with the universe. Since beyond her old every-day sources of happiness this wonderful expectation of restored wealth and prestige was promised, she had cause enough for buoyant dreams; and, at the very moment that Truax now turned and saw the young girl, her mind was running on the results of the lawsuit to the tune of—

“An’ she shall walk i’ silk attire,
An’ siller hae to spare.”

At first glance her figure and aspect struck him as vaguely familiar: then, when his eyes met her large, startled gaze, he remembered her at once as the child he had seen on the altar-steps at St. Pentecost's a few weeks before.

"Upon my word!" he exclaimed without ceremony, "here you are again!"

He scrambled down the rocks, and went up to her.

"It is really you," he went on. "I know you very well."

Doris laughed.

"And I know you, Mr. Truax," she returned.

"But how came you here?"

"There is nothing strange in that," she retorted. "I live here. The wonder is, indeed, that you ever saw me anywhere else."

He glanced over at the low stone house.

"There?" he asked, indicating it by a nod.

"Yes."

"And what is your name, child?"

"Doris Gordon."

"Gordon? Gordon? I remember now: this is Gordon's Point. You see, I used to live here myself when I was a boy."

"That must have been a long time ago, sir."

"Frankly, then, you consider me an old fellow?"

"Indeed I do not," said Doris earnestly. "I only meant that we have lived there almost fifteen years."

Truax looked at her from head to foot, and decided that she must be some fifteen or sixteen years old. He found beauty in her looks to-day which he had not seen when they met in the church. The wind had sent the blood to her cheeks, and there could be no doubt about the magnificence of her long, dark eyes. She returned his look with a laughing, half-mischievous glance. She knew very well by this time who he

was. He disarmed her girlish shyness by his candid air of middle age: she found something winning in his lazy good nature, and something stimulating as well in his keen scrutiny. She liked to stay on the beach, and she staid.

"You did not tread very closely in my footsteps," he observed. "It is twenty-two years since I was here last. It had escaped my memory that the place belonged to the Gordons. My father had a long lease of it, and we used to spend our summers here."

"The house was built by my great-grandfather," said Doris. "That bay used to be full of wild fowl in the fall, and he was a great sportsman."

"Yes, I remember." Truax looked about him dreamily. "I know every inch of this shore," he went on. "I recollect how, in the long summer afternoons, we used to come down here to the water's edge. There was a tall, handsome-faced man: it was my father. There was a beautiful woman with a child in her arms: it was my mother and little Bell. Besides, there was my brother Frank. He and I would take the little sister, and set her down here on the sand. At first she would be pleased, and thrust her babyish hands out; but, when the waves ran up and growled at her, she would cling to me with tears and beseeching."

Doris was regarding him gravely.

"Are they all alive now, sir?" she asked.

"Not one,—not one of them, except myself." He looked off to sea, and stamped his stick into the smooth, wet shingle. "We are like spring flowers

and as the summer grass," said he. "Nature is permanent: *she* survives, *she* remains. These are the same waves which used to crawl up and lick our feet."

"Yes," cried Doris, a little excited: "I know just what that feeling is. One night when both moon and tide were at their full, I ran out here from the house. Oh! it was beautiful: it all seemed boundless; water and sky both looked so wide,—as wide as eternity. For a moment I felt happy, as if it had all been made for me. Then all at once I remembered that moon and tide had been at their full, and that all this fair show had been going on, since the beginning, and would go on until the end. It made no difference who stood here and thanked God for it. I was nothing to it, no part of it. I could claim nothing, hold nothing, of it all. It almost broke my heart."

Truax looked at her with curiosity.

"Well, child, what comforted you?"

"I ran in and put my arms about aunt Dora. *She* was mine: even if she died, she was still mine. As for Nature, she cares nothing for our love."

He went on staring at her out of his brilliant, deep-set eyes.

"So you knew who I was when we first met?" said he.

"No, sir. Mr. Decker told me afterwards."

"Mr. Decker? What, Decker the lawyer?"

"Yes, sir."

Truax had a flash of inspiration, which presently developed to conviction.

"Why," said he, "you are one of the Gordons who gave the money to St. Pentecost's."

"Yes ; and one of the Gordons who are going to get back what belongs to us."

"You feel sure of that?"

"I suppose I ought not to say that, when you are against us. However, you told me that day, that you hoped my prayer would be answered."

"And the prayer was for the fortune."

"It certainly was ; that is, I prayed that my grandfather might get his lawsuit. It has all been so hard on poor grandpa. And does it not seem, sir, as if such wealth as the family used to have, and which they poured out so bountifully for the good of every body and every thing, ought, at least in part, to return? I do not wonder that it should appear incredible to him that a *Gordon*, one of us Gordons, should fall out of the world's march as he has done,—a noiseless fall, a silent slip in the snow, to be covered up, and heard of no more, while somebody else goes on in his place. He longs for another chance before he dies ; and I, too, long that he should have it. That is why I offered my prayer that day."

"If my words are written down, I shall make no effort to take them back," said Truax. "And I should like your wish to come to pass, my good little girl : I should indeed."

Doris laughed.

"They tell me you are a very clever lawyer ; that your clients generally get their cases," said she. "I assure you I tremble sometimes."

"Ah! I see you want your fortune."

"Ah! do I not? When grandpa first told me we were to be rich again, I laughed, and said I should not know what to do with a pocket full of gold. But I know now."

"It is an easy lesson to learn. It comes by instinct."

"I had never been in New York before," Doris pursued. "I had always said I should hate a city. Perhaps I should. But there it is so different from this, that at first I liked it, — liked it better than I can tell you. Here it is silent; here I have no one to speak to save grandpa, and aunt Dora, and Margery and Simon. But there — why, sir, we stood at the corner by St. Pentecost's, waiting to cross the street; and the crowd seemed like a great procession, which went on and on without ever ceasing. Everywhere, up and down, was the same rush and the same roar. I had not dreamed that the whole wide world contained so many people, and all pushing, hurrying on, seeming ready to trample down every thing that came in their way. In one respect it reminded me of the breakers here, and the constant moan of the sea. Out there on the reef the waves are always restless, always unquiet, just like those men and women rushing to and fro."

"You should have gone up town where people live."

"Oh, yes! we did go there. Grandpa wanted to pass by the old house where I was born. And, sir, a wedding was going on there; and ladies were pouring out of their carriages in their splendid dresses."

Truax laughed.

"It was then you began to long for wealth. You envied them."

"Envied them? Oh! not at all."

"But you long to be a rich girl, and go about in gay raiment."

"I have plenty of rich clothes nowadays," retorted Doris. "I have all mamma's. She died eleven months after her wedding-day, and some of her prettiest gowns had never been unpacked. Aunt Dora had told me a thousand times that they were all mine; but I never cared until that day in August when Mr. George Decker came down to tell us that his father would take up our case, and that it promised success. It suddenly seemed to me then, that I wanted to shine out as something different from the shabby little girl I had always been: so I rushed up stairs, and put on one of the silk dresses mamma used to wear."

Truax was watching her with amusement mingled with admiration. Her deep, soft eyes shone; her cheeks were flushed, and her lips apart: the wind constantly stirred the wavy ends of her yellow hair like tendrils, — the little curls at her temples, and the heavy golden masses over her shoulders as well.

"I should like to have seen you," he said gravely.

"You may well say that, sir. I was quite a picture," she returned with candid self-complacency. "The dress was azure-blue, old-fashioned; but that did not matter. It was square at the neck, and the sleeves only came to the elbow. Then the skirt was long: it trailed a mile behind me. It would have been a torment to wear it for more than an hour at a time, but for an hour I felt every inch a queen."

"One of these days, when you are grown up, you will wear those dresses. I like you best now."

Doris laughed, and looked down at her dark-blue flannel frock with intimate affection.

"I shall wear them very soon, sir," said she. "I am going to town to spend the winter."

"Yes, I remember now. Mrs. Lyon, my cousin, spoke to me of her plan of inviting you."

"I wondered if you guessed it!" cried Doris with exaltation. "I wondered if you had any idea that we were almost relations. I knew it all the time."

"I forgot it at first. You see, I came down here expecting to find the silence and solitude only broken by the sea-gulls; and consequently I was so surprised to find you, that it took me some little time to summon my scattered thoughts."

"I hope you don't prefer silence and solitude," ventured Doris with a troubled air and a new timidity.

"Not at all. We are quite good friends, are we not? I shall hope to see you in town sometimes. I don't go often into society, but we shall probably meet."

"Probably meet? I shall be at your cousin's."

"But I am not often at my cousin's. I often don't go there for months together."

Doris flushed deeply.

"I am so disappointed!" she cried with vexation. "I was counting on you as a friend: now they will be all strangers."

Truax laughed. "When you get to town, my dear," said he with lazy good-nature, "you will care little enough for an old fellow like me."

They were crossing the ridge towards the house, and at this moment came upon old Mr. Gordon, who was pacing to and fro in the October sunshine under the stunted cedars, his hands crossed behind him, clutching the morning paper and a letter from his lawyer, just received. His habit for years had been to spend half his time over the newspaper. The news of the world, the strife of parties, wars and rumors of wars, were as nothing to him save as they influenced the lists of figures bulletined from the stock exchange. Over that column the old man had ardently brooded ever since he lost the family fortunes, chafing restlessly to be in the busy marts again, and avenge himself for his defeat. Since his lawsuit began, however, he had felt content to wait. To-day it was a letter from Mr. Decker which the old man had been reading over and over, and his thoughts were so far away, that he did not at first notice that Doris had a companion; then when he lifted his wrinkled hand, and shaded his eyes for a clearer view of the stranger, he needed many a prompting of memory before he could be made to understand who the visitor was.

Truax's name was so associated with the case by this time, that Mr. Gordon at once regarded him with suspicion, but met him, nevertheless, with the grand melancholy manner he could assume at need. Doris went on with her chatter to the lawyer, appealing now and then to her grandfather, who stood by, hearing this alien talk with vexation. He was habitually jealous of all interests in which he had no share; and this girlish prattle seemed too puerile to be offered to this power

ful enemy, who, he more than suspected, had come down to spy out the nakedness of their land. He broke in sharply presently, and changed the subject from the prosaic story of Doris's every-day pursuits, asking some question concerning the intermarriage of the Lennoxes and Truaxes two generations before.

"I don't know in the least," Truax rejoined. "It may be so. My brother's name was Francis Lennox."

"You have not studied your genealogy."

"Not at all. I suppose a man must get up a taste for such subjects in early youth."

"They are the consolation of the old instead," said Mr. Gordon. "In youth we flatter ourselves that we shall mould events a little; that the world has been waiting for us and the results of our energies: but, after a few feeble efforts and failures, it is a comfort to rest in the strength of those who went before us. I used to believe largely and vividly in my own powers: now I shall have more satisfaction in recovering part of our old estate than in winning a kingdom for myself."

The lawyer regarded him with an almost painful curiosity. His enfeebled aspect had changed; and it was easy to read the language of the restless eyes, and the fluttering movement of the slender hands.

"I hope, sir," said Truax, speaking with emphasis, "that the matter of the compromise is all settled by this time."

"There was mention of some insignificant restitution, — a trifle of twenty-five thousand dollars."

The old man spoke quietly; but his eyes gleamed and his nostrils quivered.

"A trifle?" repeated Truax, smiling.

"Yes, a trifle," cried Mr. Gordon, stung into rage. "You come down here and learn that I am feeble; that I live in this dull house, reduced to dire straits of poverty: you infer that I ought to despair of results I may never live to see accomplished, hence may be solicited by paltry bribes of present indulgence. Don't doubt but what, when George Decker first brought me the news of your offer, I had my moment of temptation. I had to struggle against the demon, seeing beyond its lying promises of transient relief. You are right, sir, to smile with derision at my calling twenty-five thousand dollars an insignificant matter. It is not insignificant. That sum would surround my old age with cruelly-needed comforts, yet 'tis not enough to barter my birthright for."

"Don't, dear grandpa, don't," said his grandchild, looking into his angry, excited face, and pressing her hand against his shoulder.

Truax's trained composure was not disturbed by this outburst. He waited until the old man grew silent, and his head sank once more upon his breast.

"It is inexpedient for us to discuss this matter," he then remarked coolly. "I should be unfaithful to my obligations, however, did I not suggest to you, in a friendly way, that it is never worth while to lose sight of the practicable in straining after the ideal. You have good advice. Decker is a shrewd lawyer."

"Oh! Decker is all very well," retorted Mr. Gordon sharply. "He answers my purpose; although he lives in a narrow circle, and regards his own cleverness

with too much complacency. I like his son better. I have every thing to be grateful to George for, — every thing.”

“Oh, not every thing, grandpa!” said Doris. “Sometimes I fancy we should have been very much better off if he had never found that tiresome memorandum about the will.”

“That was the fatal fruit from the tree of knowledge,” put in Truax. “Well, well, who knows?”

“Doris,” broke in Mr. Gordon peevishly, “run on and prepare your aunt Dora for a visitor. — Mr. Truax will lunch with us, of course.”

Doris obeyed him, while the two men walked in a more leisurely way towards the house. Before they entered it, the young girl had delivered the message to her aunt, held a short discussion about ways and means with Margery in the kitchen, and escaped at the back of the cottage. Here she scrambled over the ledge of rocks fringed with a few poor cedars, and vanished behind them, Carlo still keeping soberly by her side. After a brisk walk she gained a sort of nook, where lived their sole neighbor, Simon the fisherman. The old man was sitting in the sunshine, his hat well down over his eyes, a sailor’s thimble on his palm, mending a torn sail. He had had a touch of rheumatism during the equinoctials, but the October weather was curing him. The sight of the ocean on a day like this made his thoughts expand like the swelling sails of his old ships; and he was quavering over and over, —

“Green grow the rushes, O!
Green grow the rushes, O!

The sweetest lass I ever kissed,
She lived among the rushes, O!"

"How d'ye do, Simon," cried Doris, appearing in sight.

The old fellow saluted, looking up slowly.

"All right, sir, on deck!" he muttered, feeling half ashamed of his foolish old tune.

"Green grow the rushes, do they?" pursued Doris.

"Let me tell you something, Miss Doris," said old Simon, never above improving his opportunity. "All down the Pacific coast the Spanish call the English 'Los Gringos.' Now, I found out at Callao what that meant. When the first English ships put in there for water, the sailors used to work all day, singing, —

"'Green grow the rushes, O!"

So the natives called 'em *Green Grows*, and finally got it into Gringos."

But Doris had no patience for Simon's old yarns to-day.

"Put by your work," she cried imperiously. "I am going fishing. We have a guest to dinner, and there is nothing to eat."

Without more ado, the sailor put his thimble in his pocket, and laid his work away. The skiff lay chained to the rocks, rising and falling as the tide beat with its full but languid pulse. He jumped in, followed by Doris and her dog. In another moment the waters flashed in answer to the stroke of two pairs of oars, and the boat was off.

At this instant Truax appeared on the rocks.

"Am I too late?" he cried. "Your aunt told me I might follow you, Miss Doris."

Simon was on his legs at once with his boat-hook, and drew the skiff back to the iron ring. Truax sprang down without another word. Doris gave him a silent nod, and indicated that he was to sit in the stern. She had lost her holiday air, and seemed in a business mood.

The boat now shot rapidly across the quiet surface of the sheltered cove into the wider sweep of crispy, curling waves which felt the tides and the south winds. The sky was blue over their heads; and the skiff, rounding towards the cape, brought them each moment into a clearer view of the wide ocean, more beautiful to-day than any words could tell. Gulls flew shrieking overhead, dipping at intervals, then hovering poised, while their wings flashed more radiant than the light; the bare rocks, black and gray and purple, quivered in the noontide blaze, their shapes suggesting Titanic sleepers stretched along the shore. Truax looked about him pleased; then wondering why, with all this prodigality of loveliness, the little girl opposite him found not a word to say, he asked her why she rowed so steadily, instead of wasting a look on the magical world of sea and sky.

"I have other and very important things to think about," she replied soberly. "The tide is wrong for the fish, and I am wondering if you could make out a lunch on four different kinds of oysters."

"I MARVEL HOW THE FISHES LIVE."

TRUAX stared at her.

"Four different kinds of oysters?" he repeated. "I think one might answer."

"First," said Doris, looking at him with fixed gravity, "you could have them raw: next panned or stewed, then scalloped, and finally broiled. But I don't entirely despair of a fish."

"Don't despair about any thing," returned Truax. "I'm not hungry, and need nothing until I get back to Oldinport. Give up the notion of dinner, and let us cruise about a little. It is enchanting here on the water. It seems like a summer's day."

"That would never do," Doris replied, rejecting the temptation before she allowed herself to be moved by it. "My aunt is getting out the very prettiest china and the best silver. She will set the table with her own hands. It was my part to find something to eat."

"Oh, well! then let us take pleasure on the way. There is no hurry."

"Yes, there is," retorted Doris with plenty of decision. "Time and tide wait for no man."

She uttered this truism with the force of a freshly-conceived idea, and Truax was impelled almost to laughter by her air of resolution and energy. He said

to himself that he had never seen just such a girl, — half-child, half-woman, spirited, audacious, and candid. All seemed new to her: she had begun the world at the beginning, and was ready to enjoy life with a zest unknown to most girls, who have a languid, half-knowledge of every thing by the time they enter their teens.

“The Gordons were always hospitable,” she now remarked impressively. “We like to keep up the old traditions. Besides, in a sort of way, you belong to the family.”

“Of course I do. I” —

“Hush!” said Doris with an imperative gesture, suddenly resting her oars. She looked around, and nodded to Simon, who, at her motion, stopped his vigorous strokes, and paddled quietly into a little rocky cove where swift eddies circled and swirled. Here the boat swung around of its own accord, and Doris threw a line from the stern. Truax was afraid of being in her way, and attempted to move; but she motioned to him to keep still. At first she remained standing, with her gaze intently fixed on the water, feeling her line with a strong and delicate hold as the currents caught it. Her features took an anxious expression, her great eyes darkening into a wistful melancholy gaze, and her mobile lips drooping. Once or twice she shook her head mournfully, and seemed to be saying to herself that there was no chance of a bite, that the *menu* of the coming meal must be limited to oysters, and that the Gordons must hereafter accept a blot on their scutcheon where hospitality was concerned.

Truax could hardly resist interposing a word of deprecation, begging her to desist, assuring her it did not matter, but under her imperious mandate did not venture to break the silence. All at once the gloom vanished from her face, a smile broke over her lips, and her eyes flashed laughter. She flung herself down on the seat close beside Truax, leaned over the edge of the boat, and tugged stealthily at her line: at the same instant a fish leaped in the distance. She began to pull in steadily, exerting her full strength. Her cheeks grew more and more crimson, her lips dewy, and her eyes dilated. It was still a struggle, and a struggle against an old sea-veteran up to all fishy tricks and dodges, and in his own element. All three in the boat were breathless while he splashed and wriggled, and twisted and curled; and all three simultaneously gave a gleeful shout as she drew him safely over the gunwale.

"I do say it, Miss Do," cried old Simon in a perfect ecstasy of admiration,—"I do say it, if so happen there be a fish in the sea, it'll jump mad at your hook! No such feller ud have taken my bait two hours after th' tide turned."

Doris received the tribute with a modest glow of satisfaction in her achievement.

"There's always just a possibility," she observed. "Now, then, Simon, I want about a hundred oysters. That will do."

"Well, Miss Gordon," said Truax, "I used 'to marvel how the fishes live in the sea.' I have a fellow-feeling for that monster."

She looked at him with a laugh which showed her pretty, even, milk-white teeth. "I hope your sympathy will increase your relish for him. He is a fine fellow, isn't he? See how he takes the light. Yet," she added with a sigh, "it is hard. He enjoyed life, I suppose. I don't know — there are some matters of right and wrong difficult to understand. — Why do you laugh?" she added abruptly, staring at Truax.

"You slay pitilessly, and then you pity. Were I the fish, I should refuse your poetic second-thought."

Doris looked serious as she confronted the problem her evident inconsistency had suggested; but events crowded too hastily upon each other for one train of thought to work itself fully out in her mind. She had taken to her oars the moment the fish flapped into the basket. Simon had worked manfully at the helm; and they had shot out of the cove, pointing straight up the bay, and by this time had reached the oyster-bed.

"A hundred will do," said she in a clear voice, as the old sailor got out his rake. "You must not tell anybody the secret of our oyster-bed," she added, looking at Truax, and nodding. "Simon and I together planted it three years ago. Nobody else in the whole world knows about it."

"I swear not to tell," said Truax, more diverted by this novel fashion of getting his dinner than he thought it worth while to confess. "I intend, however, to forswear civilization, and come here and live with you."

"Are we, then, so uncivilized?" said Doris, looking at him anxiously. "Are we positively odd, *bizarre*,

antique? That is what grandpa said when Mrs. Lyon proposed that I should spend the winter with her. 'You'll be like some primeval animal in a world which has outgrown it, Doris,' said he. It was only aunt Dora who believed I had been well brought up."

She was so concerned about this matter, which she had heard discussed of late, that Truax would have liked to set to work and flatter her; but she looked at him with so candid an air, she rested so artlessly upon his opinion, and at the same time asserted with so pretty a dignity her right to be treated with entire seriousness, that he replied with gravity, —

"You have been well brought up. No doubt of that."

"Do you really mean it? Do I seem to you like other girls?"

Truax regarded her silently, turning the question over in his mind. She really seemed to him as much more captivating than other girls of her age (which he decided was about sixteen) as a wild bird in the wood is more interesting than a bird in a cage. But he reflected, — here she felt herself at home; she was used to this half wild life: any touch of elegance against the background of this savage desolation had more than its usual effect. She was exquisitely pretty to his eyes; but he thought it probable he over-estimated her good looks because she was so entirely in contrast with the bare, sad life about her. Yet no doubt her social instincts were strong with the blood in her veins of generations of men and women who had swayed society. She took an easy *pose*, mastering

whatever situation presented itself, missing none of its privileges. She had the grace of an absolute unconsciousness combined with a resolute purpose to do what she had to do. Altogether, Truax said to himself that she was likely to find actual life pleasant.

"I don't think," said he, "you resemble other girls closely: still the points where you differ, *I* think, are to your advantage."

She had been looking at him with intense earnestness, and, fearing much from his answer, was slow to construe it favorably. When his meaning gradually dawned upon her, she smiled with an air of luxurious enjoyment of such approbation, not gaining color by a mere blush, but seeming to pulse and glow.

"Now, don't be flattered by what I said," exclaimed Truax with easy authority. "Don't, for Heaven's sake, go to thinking about yourself, — whether you are this or that, or as to how you impress people. Be what you actually are, and work out your salvation that way. I wish you were not going to town this winter."

"Oh! do you, sir?" Doris cried sorrowfully.

"You'll come back half-spoiled, your head full of all sorts of nonsensical ideas. The very dulness of your life here will heighten your raptures over your new pleasures. I like you just as you are now."

"I promise not to change."

He shrugged his shoulders. "You'll grow older, for one thing," said he, and mentally followed out the suggestion of beaux and suitors, who would make her think of marriage, and with such thoughts compel her

to lose this frankness and freshness. Simon broke in upon these auguries with a practical hint that the morning sport was over, and that it was time to go home.

"Here's a hundred and ten, as I make out, Miss Doris," said he ; dropping the last fat oyster upon the pile, over which he extended his horny hands as if in blessing.

Doris's mind had wandered a little, but now came back.

"Beauties, aren't they, Simon?" said she. "You'll have a good luncheon, Mr. Truax," she added, taking up the oars ; and the moment Simon lurched into his seat the boat started off buoyantly, like a steed that knows its rider.

Not another word or look did Truax gain until they reached the shore. The holiday was over for Doris, and now remained the intricate but delightful perplexities of the coming luncheon. She turned the matter over in her mind, bringing all her experience and all her resources to throw fresh light upon it. Once or twice she meditated putting some question to the guest as to his private tastes and predilections, since all she wanted to do was to please him. A sense of delicacy of maintaining fitting reserves prevailed, however ; and she drew the veil of mystery over her plans.

As he walked to the house beside her, she made an effort to answer his questions, and follow out his suggestions ; but her pre-occupation was so palpable, he would not force her. He was perfectly well aware of

what she was thinking, and hoped that the matter of lunch would soon be dismissed, and she might be free to go on amusing him. He had to wait. When the meal was announced, Doris was not at table, nor did she appear until dessert, when she came in with a crimson face, and an air of evident fatigue, but in the highest spirits. By that time Truax's feelings of regret at her absence had merged into a lively appreciation of her skill in cookery. He had had a good meal, and the morning's exercise had given him an unusual appetite. Old Mr. Gordon, at his daughter's suggestion, now brought out a bottle of priceless Madeira, and after shaking his head, as if deliberating, proceeded to open it. The cordial soon unloosened his tongue, and he talked incessantly ; so that it was almost impossible for Truax to speak a word to the little girl opposite, to whom he felt cordially grateful. It was well on towards the early autumnal sunset when they rose from table, and the guest was compelled to take his leave at once. He felt a lively desire for further speech with Doris, and even went so far as to make a laughing suggestion that she should walk part of the way back with him. But this proposal was calmly negatived by her aunt, who had impressed him with the most entire respect, and he did not venture to press it.

He was to take the eight o'clock evening train from Oldinport back to New York : while he walked along the shore, and later, while he was being whirled along the road at midnight, a recollection came back to him from time to time of a slight figure flitting before him, the little head always haughty and erect.

A CAPRICE.

MR. MARSTON called to see Truax the very morning the latter returned to town. There was to be a second hearing in the suit of Gordon *v.* Warrington that day week. Truce was over, and action was to proceed as rapidly as it might. The two lawyers discussed the present bearings of the case, divided the work, and settled upon the details. But Mr. Marston had not left his office at mid-day to talk over such merely dry and practical details. After delivering his opinions with his usual gravity, he made it evident that something of importance yet remained unsaid.

Truax had learned the art of waiting until a client told his full story, so now dropped his chin on his breast, and settled himself in an attitude of attention, bending his deep, brilliant gaze upon his visitor.

Still Mr. Marston could not bring himself to speak. He scowled at the door and at the window, warmed his hands at the fire, and rubbed the back of his neck. Truax had not been slow to gather the meaning of certain signs, and thought it safe to broach an interesting subject, by way of experiment.

"So, Mr. Marston, Mrs. Warrington is going abroad."

The old lawyer gave him a cautious glance.

"You have seen her lately, Truax?"

"Not for more than a fortnight. Ford told me the news."

Truax's mental condition regarding his client was at last thoroughly re-adjusted. He had come back to town prepared to take a purely critical view of his relations to this most beautiful of women. He now took pleasure in launching the old lawyer upon the current, and was amused to see the air of half-relief and half-irritation with which he yielded to such unwonted haste.

"Naturally, Marston, you are not pleased to lose her."

"To lose her?" repeated Mr. Marston with his dyspeptic, fastidious air. "The phrase 'to lose her' would perhaps suggest a greater degree of intimacy than it has hitherto been my privilege to claim. It has always been my intention, when opportunity should be proffered, to cultivate with some special assiduity the acquaintance of a lady so noble and so superior."

Truax nodded. "I think I understand you," he said gravely.

Mr. Marston was pleased to think that his mild raptures had impressed his companion with his ardor.

"With such feelings, on your side at least," added Truax, "why do you let her go to Europe?"

"I find it impossible to prevent it," said Mr. Marston with a gesture of despair. "I have told her that her withdrawal would eclipse the gayety of New York."

"Well said."

"The indifference with which she looks on, or

rather declines to look on, detaching herself from all the interests which ought to bind her" — He stopped short with some agitation.

"Such a sudden undertaking after she had made all her plans to pass the winter here needs an interpreting clause," said Truax. "What has started her off?"

Mr. Marston began to walk about nervously.

"I suspect," he returned, with a sort of quiver in his voice, "that she is lonely. Accustomed as she has been to the loving anxieties, the incessant tenderness, of a husband — she" —

Finding that the broken sentence was not likely to be concluded, Truax suggested, —

"Why doesn't she marry again? Besides," he added, "she could not have" — He interrupted himself just in time, being about to repudiate most cynically the idea that a lovely young woman like Mrs. Warrington could have cared deeply for a sexagenarian husband. "Why doesn't she marry again?" he repeated, conscious that he thus opened an interesting subject.

"She may bring herself to do it in time."

"If I were a suitor of Mrs. Warrington's," said Truax emphatically, "I should simply act according to the logic of the occasion, and not allow her to go to Europe. Going to Europe is a large and dangerous resource for such a woman."

Mr. Marston stared at him blankly.

"I don't quite understand you."

"She will marry abroad."

"Good heavens!" said Mr. Marston, then ejaculated feebly, almost under his breath, "*Good* heavens!"

"Why doesn't Ford marry her?" pursued Truax with some vehemence. "I suspect him to be head over ears in love with her."

"She is perfectly indifferent to Dr. Ford, perfectly indifferent," retorted Mr. Marston irritably.

"What makes you think she is lonely?" Truax asked sharply. "You ought to have good grounds for such opinions."

"Opinions they are not," answered Mr. Marston in a melancholy way, — "simply unformulated ideas which the sight of her evident dejection has aroused."

"Is she dejected?"

"Painfully so. She has grown thin. She must," pursued the lawyer excitedly, "have lost pounds of flesh. Such results when there is no actual ill health have some profound cause."

"She is probably out of health."

"Dr. Ford distinctly insisted that she had never been better in her life. He seemed much offended by my endeavor to sound him on the subject."

Truax was tired of discussing the topic, and dismissed it: still he did not try to banish it from his thoughts. He had begun to turn the idea over in his mind of using his own influence to keep Mrs. Warrington in New York. He could not have analyzed his feelings in the matter, but he objected to her going abroad. It would narrow his horizons. Ever since Alan Ford had given him his candid advice against calling upon Mrs. Warrington, Truax had

made up his mind to see her at least once before she sailed. It seemed an ingenious freak of circumstances which had brought him and Katharine together, and he was not satisfied to let so piquant a conjunction lose its meaning for lack of spirited action on his part.

He set out the very next day to see Mrs. Warrington, at an hour when he might expect to find her alone. He was ushered into a part of the house which he had not before seen,—a small morning-room beyond the parlors, where the man expected to find his mistress. She was not there, however. Truax sat down, and while he waited had time to think of many things.

The room was charmingly fitted up, and some graceful disorder gave signs that it had been recently occupied. A deep arm-chair was drawn close up to the wood-fire in the low grate; a table beside it was covered with a litter of notes and invitations; and an open book was turned down on its face. Truax yielded to an impulse of curiosity to see what Katharine read to amuse herself in private. It was Turgenieff's "On the Eve." He had never seen or even heard of the novel, and now looked through two chapters before he put it down. Still, with all this diversion, the interval was so long before she came in, that he grew restless, and began walking about, looking first from one window, and then from another, and finally bestowed a languid attention upon a cabinet whose shelves were crowded with bric-a-brac. He took up a cup of Satsuma, wondering whether it were

porcelain or old ivory, when he was startled by the sight of a face in the panel mirror, and, turning, saw Mrs. Warrington standing near, looking at him with a smile. He had rarely been so confounded, and in his trepidation was so unlucky as to drop the bowl, which was shattered by the fall. There could be no doubt of his having begun the interview with horrible awkwardness. He took Katharine's hand, and the blood rushed to his face as he remembered with peculiar vividness that the last time he held it he had kissed it. Such a consciousness was apparently all on his own side. She was perfectly tranquil. Never had she attracted him so much. Her morning-dress, of some thick, white material, trimmed with swan's down, took his eye: there was a pale luminousness about her features, and at the same time a fire in her glance, that he had never seen before.

"I have broken your cup," said he with a vexed glance towards the fragments. "I hope it was not costly. I confess I can never see the use of such perishable things."

"Nor I. I have heard that it brings a person bad luck to break a cup on entering a house," Katharine returned with composure. "But I dare say you defy auguries. It is very good in you to come and see me. I am going to Europe soon: indeed, I sail next Saturday."

She had seated herself in the arm-chair by the fire. Truax remained standing, gazing at her as if fascinated.

"I have come to quarrel with you for that determi

nation," he cried sharply, as if he felt himself robbed and despoiled. "Why do you go?"

She looked at him with a smile which he felt to be half mocking. It piqued him irresistibly. She was a cleverer woman than he had thought her, and could hold her own against any man. As to her being in love with himself, the idea had not once crossed his mind since she came in.

"Why do I go?" she repeated. "There is nothing unusual in my going abroad. I have already been five or six times."

"How long shall you stay?"

"I am not certain."

"Three months?"

"Longer than that: at least a year."

"Do you take your children?"

"No. They will remain under my aunt's charge."

"You seem to be indifferent about my claims."

"You mean that I am indifferent to the lawsuit, I suppose," returned Katharine with another of her quiet smiles. "I confess that I am at ease about it. I know that I leave my interests in safe hands."

She was very beautiful and very gracious; but Truax felt mocked by both beauty and graciousness. He determined to prolong the interview until he reached some more satisfactory point than this. He put down his hat, drew off his gloves, and laid them on the mantel-piece, moved a chair opposite her, and sat down.

"You did not effect that compromise," said he in his most deliberate way, leaning his head back, and looking at her with an inscrutable air.

"No. We were not sufficiently generous."

"Oh, yes! unless the contestant was in his second childhood. By the way, Mrs. Warrington, since I was here last I have seen these Gordons."

"Are they here in town?"

"No: I encountered them oddly enough. I went down to the coast, where my father used to take us when I was a boy. I often see the place in my dreams, — nothing there but the sands and the sea. The Gordons live there in the very house where I used to spend my summers more than twenty years ago."

"It sounds rather dreary, — nothing but sand and sea."

"It is dreary. But then I like it. I like nature to suggest something illimitable."

"You don't like barriers and boundaries."

Truax looked at Katharine with a fine, discriminating air, and smiled in his turn. She had spoken with something not unlike eagerness.

"There are some boundaries I should enjoy," said he.

"So the Gordons live in your old cottage?" remarked Katharine, coming back to the subject. "Tell me about them."

"The family interested me. Mr. Gordon is very old, and is possessed by a whimpering anxiety to enjoy a new lease of wealth. His feebleness touched me somewhat. He has a daughter, Miss Dora, who particularly pleased me, humoring my vanity by reminiscences of what a fine boy I was."

"There are only those two?"

"The third is a grand-daughter, — Doris Gordon, a most interesting girl."

"Beautiful?"

"So she seemed to me. She has a clear, chiselled face with a charming outline." He was silent a moment, as if hesitating about the words which should best describe her. "She has all the *naïveté*, the abandon," he pursued, "of a clever, brilliant child who has not seen the world."

"You prefer youthfulness, freshness, in a woman?"

"I'm not certain of that. I know that sometimes it seems a crudity for a woman to be too young."

Truax began to believe that he was playing his game cleverly. Katharine was no longer indifferent, and no longer vexed him by her self-possession; and at this speech she colored, then bit her lip, and dropped her eyes, feeling helpless.

"Miss Gordon charmed me," he went on. "She did for me of her own free will what no beautiful girl ever did before."

"And what was that?"

"You cannot guess."

A thousand conjectures flashed through Katharine's mind, not one of which she would have dared to utter aloud.

"I never guess," she said dully.

"She went out in a boat, and caught fish for my dinner."

"How very odd!"

"'How very agreeable!' was my thought. I have, moreover, some grounds for my suspicion that she

cooked them afterwards. Was not that an experience? Doesn't Tennyson allude to something of the sort?"

"Not just that. What he says is, —

"‘I will take some savage woman, she shall rear my dusky race.’"

It is the offspring who will catch the wild goat by the hair. Then he dismisses the fancy with disgust at the thought of their narrow foreheads, and incapacity for companionship."

"You disenchant me. I thought Tennyson was on my side, and that it was safe to idealize an existence where" —

"Is the lovely Miss Gordon a savage?"

"Far from it. She even suggests a high civilization."

"She seems to have shown you the promised land."

"She did put many thoughts into my head."

Mrs. Warrington dropped her eyes for a moment, then said, looking up, —

"Confess that at last you fell in love."

Truax burst out laughing.

"My dear Mrs. Warrington," he returned in high spirits, "she is a little girl in short dresses."

"Oh, indeed!" murmured Katharine, shrinking slightly from his expansive gaze. For a moment there was a pause: then, with an effort, she remarked, —

"Mrs. Lyon tells me she is to have a niece staying with her this winter. Can it be this Miss Gordon?"

"Yes: she is coming up to town shortly."

"You will have plenty of opportunities of meeting her, then, at your cousin's house."

"Unluckily my cousin's house rarely attracts me. I went there once to see you, Mrs. Warrington."

He spoke with cheerful alacrity; but her eyes drooped, and she made no answer.

"It seems a pity that the old man should not have accepted the twenty-five thousand dollars," remarked Truax, ending the somewhat prolonged pause, and speaking exactly as if they had been discussing business the whole time. "I ventured to warn him against the consequences of losing every thing by demanding too much."

"It is certainly more sensible to be satisfied with enough; but enough never suffices me, I am certain of that."

"Is that your reason for going to Europe?" asked Truax swiftly. He moved his chair close to hers, and looked at her steadily. "What more do you want?" he demanded imperiously.

"Oh! I have not much."

"You have a beautiful home, children, friends. Why do you go?"

"As if it mattered to you whether I go or stay," cried Katharine, thrown off her guard.

She was trembling. While this burning blush lighted up her face, it would be hard to define the precise limitations of the charm Truax found in her. Her eyes darkened, her lips curved down like a grieved child's, the rich color lent her a splendid beauty. He was stirred by a vague promise of some untasted happiness almost within his reach. The excited, baffled mood which had controlled him earlier in the interview

now came into collision with the dangerous knowledge that what her manner had shown from the first moment of their meeting was in reality the secret of a curious preference for him. "*Shall I, shall I, shall I?*" he asked himself. His untouched heart answered, "No." Yet there was clearly an intellectual zest in the solution of this most perplexing problem. The situation was too fresh, too piquant, to be lightly resigned.

"It matters to me very much. I want you to stay," he went on, speaking softly, yet with the audacity of a spoiled child who will have his way. "I can't bear to have you go just now when I am beginning" — He broke off, and smiled at her silently. "Stay, and let me go on falling in love with you," he added half laughing.

In this crisis she had one advantage at least, that of a fuller experience than his. She understood him better than he understood himself.

"You will never fall in love with me," she said, trying to speak lightly, but failing to do so. "When you are actually in love, you will see clearly what you want: there will be no such hesitations in your mind."

Truax pointed to the open book on the table.

"You were reading that novel?"

She assented.

"Is not my experience a little like the hero's? Ellen was a generous woman. I read the chapter where she met him going away."

"She was certain of his regard. Insaroff loved her like a madman from the first day they met, and she knew it."

Truax looked meditative. "There has been some madness about me," he said presently, laughing. "Perhaps you have described my case. Honestly, I don't know just what you mean by loving like a madman. I assure you I should consider it a dangerous proceeding to fall in love in that way. I fancy it is only done in books. Young fellows may have their dreams, but soon have to put a stop to that. I found it necessary to look at my impulses inflexibly, and put them down. I admire you deeply, Mrs. Warrington; yet I honestly confess to you that I ought to hesitate a good deal before daring to think of asking your hand in marriage. I am not yet used to the idea. Besides, you are like a queen, and far above me. The utmost I could give you would be a scanty return for the freedom I should compel you to renounce. Now, if you would not go to Europe so hastily, if you would stay and give me time, I might venture to forget my deserts, to grow more selfish, and insist" —

Katharine gave him a pained, proud look.

"You are very clever, very amusing," she said quietly. "I am unable to parry wits with you. Yet, if you like to joke about such a matter" —

"I am not joking. Good heavens! I was never farther from joking. I am discussing my drawbacks seriously."

"You are not a serious personage."

She smiled as she spoke; and Truax, feeling the force of her unspoken reproach, realized that his inquisitiveness had led him to a climax of detestable folly. He could no longer control events, and amuse himself

by posing alternately as a man of the world and the victim of a passion. He had chosen the latter *rôle*, and must commit himself to the fullest. He must not only allow himself an impulse of tenderness, but let himself to be carried away by it. He must now in common decency ask her to marry him. He sprang up, strode across the room, returned, and almost flung himself on his knees beside her.

"Here I am," he said. "I've crossed the Rubicon. Mrs. Warrington, if you have ever thought within your heart that I was a man to win your love; if—if" — He was forced to stop. She was almost crying: her breath came in quick gasps; she gazed at him, white and trembling, her eyes dilated.

"No woman ever loved me," he began again, a little agitated in his turn. "I do not know yet what is in me. I hope, I almost feel sure, that I have a heart to reward the woman who did love me. Since that last day I was here I—I—I have not been myself. I have forgotten nothing — something I felt was too sweet for any man to forget. If what I seemed to understand then was true, Mrs. Warrington" — He flung his arm around her.

With an indescribable glance she put up her hand, and for a moment laid it on his hair, while she looked into his face.

"Why do you say such things to me, unless you love me?" she whispered. "You do not know me — you do not begin to know me. I cannot bear it."

"Are you afraid to take me?"

"I am afraid unless you love me."

"Love you? Is love so difficult? I think any man might know how to love the most charming woman in the world."

She did not answer him, but sat regarding him with a look of happiness such as best expresses itself in silence.

"You will not go to Europe?" said he pertinaciously.

She made no answer, only looked down at him, smiling.

"Oh!" exclaimed Truax with emphasis, "you *are* charming!"

UN MAUVAIS QUART D'HEURE FOR ALAN.

AT five o'clock the same day Dr. Ford came in, and, not finding Mrs. Warrington in her morning-room, sat down and waited. He took by chance the very chair Truax had left to make his declaration to Katharine. A little bunch of violets was crushed into the Turkey rug; and, picking them up, he recognized them as the same he had brought that morning for Katharine to put in her girdle. The flowers told him no secrets; and he was far enough from guessing that Truax had imperiously claimed them, then dropped and trodden upon them. Over by the cabinet were the bits of the Satsuma bowl. Alan started up aghast, remembering what a costly purchase it had been. While he was examining the pieces, he heard the rustle of a silk skirt, and, turning, saw Mrs. Eliot, who entered with unusual eagerness, and, coming up to him, grasped his arm.

"Do you know?" she asked with vehemence.

"Know who broke this? No, I have no idea."

"It is a pity," said the old lady. "But no matter. In fact, I feel as if nothing mattered any longer."

"What has happened?"

For answer she shook her head ominously, and, going back to the door, closed it, then glanced through the *portières* down the long drawing-rooms.

"I never was so amazed in all my life," she began portentously. "I hardly know how to tell you."

Alan had grown pale, and his lips were tightly shut. His eyes questioned Mrs. Eliot.

"Katharine is engaged to be married," said she nervously, looking away from him; then, as she heard no answer, she turned back to his face, studying it as only deaf people learn to do.

He showed no sign of any thing save expectation.

"To John Truax, I suppose," he remarked finally.

Mrs. Eliot nodded. "Did you ever hear of any thing so sudden? He was never in the house but once before."

Alan smiled a little bitterly. "She will not go to Europe," said he. "He knew how to keep her here."

"I have seen a change in her this fall," pursued the old lady, only half-catching his low-spoken words. "When she decided all at once to go to Europe, I knew it had happened at last. I have always said, that, first or last, she was certain to do something reckless. I have seen it in her eyes, that she longed to do it. It was not natural for a young girl like her to marry Mr. Warrington. She had to govern herself then, and has gone on governing herself ever since until now. Of course, after a time, anybody must break down and be natural. Nobody except me knew how she felt about her first marriage. For a whole week before the wedding she was almost beside herself: she used to lie all night on the floor, and sob. The day I bought her veil at Stewart's, and brought it home, she took it from me, and tore it

into ribbons. The least thing that reminded her of what was coming revolted her. It was so lucky that the veil I bought was only tulle ! The very next day Mr. Warrington presented her with a magnificent one of Point d'Alençon. I looked to it well that she had no chance to tear that. It cost two thousand dollars, and was long enough to " —

Alan made an impatient gesture.

"Tell me all about it," said he, "when it happened — how it happened."

They had remained standing ; but now he drew Mrs. Eliot to the low easy-chair, and forced her to sit down, then, standing in front of her, prepared to listen.

The old lady had not had a real story to tell for many a day, her infirmity shutting her off from competent knowledge of the little dramas which went on under her eyes. Thus she might have enjoyed considerable prolixity of detail ; but she felt for Alan, whose face wore a look of actual physical pain.

"It was more than an hour ago," she began, folding and unfolding her little plump hands as they lay in her lap. "I had no idea that Katharine was receiving visitors in here at this time of day, and I came down to get a book. I opened that door wide. Then I saw — They were standing just there. He — he — he — had — his — arm — about — her ! Her head was on his shoulder." Alan turned away, and the old lady quite broke down. "Excuse my giving these details," she said with agitation ; "but in order to " —

"No matter. Go on," almost shouted Alan.

"Of course the position of things was as clear as

could be. I never saw Katharine like that, even with Mr. Warrington.—Well, well, to proceed. Mr. Truax saw me, and whispered to Kate, who raised her head. ‘I see it all,’ said I. ‘You need not say a word, my dearest child. You are engaged to be married. I wish you and Mr. Truax joy, I do with all my heart.’ I went up and kissed them both. I was so overcome, I hardly knew what I was doing. Katharine grew very red, and walked over and sat down in that chair; but Mr. Truax gave me his hand, and said, ‘She has promised to give up her trip to Europe.’ I felt hardly able to speak: so I turned round, and went out and up stairs. There on the landing I met the two little angels, just dressed, and looking so beautiful. I thought Mr. Truax ought to see them at once: so I took them from the nurses, and, leading one by each hand, brought them in. Mr. Truax had gone over to Katharine, and stood with his hand on the back of her chair, leaning down, talking and laughing. ‘O sir!’ I burst out, almost crying, it all seemed so affecting, ‘I have brought down these sweet children of Katharine’s to kiss their dear father.’ But while I spoke I felt sure that I had made a mistake. Katharine looked dreadfully annoyed; while Mr. Truax colored, and bit his lip, and kept perfectly silent. Presently, however, as if he felt that he must resign himself to circumstances, he half laughed, sat down, and beckoned to the children; and Maud ran and climbed up on his knee. He pushed the hair from her forehead, and kissed her, saying a few words I could not catch, then set her

down, patted Davy on the head, and in obedience, no doubt, to some word from Kate, rang the bell, and sent for the nurses, who took the children away. I assure you, Dr. Ford, I followed them."

Alan, in spite of his feelings, could not resist smiling. If the lovers had not considered Mrs. Eliot's intrusion to be an interruption, it was evident that the incident struck him in that light.

"I suppose it all showed deficient tact on my part," said the old lady, conceding the point; "but when a man marries a widow" —

"He has not married her yet. But there seems little doubt that they are engaged."

"Katharine is in love with him, I am sure; but, when I think of the way he looked at those two beautiful children, I" —

Mrs. Eliot was proceeding with a dubious shake of the head, when Alan put up his hand warningly. He heard Katharine's step across the marble floor of the hall. In another moment she came in. She had found the house stifling, and had been walking, first in the conservatory, afterwards in the little garden. She still wore the morning-dress trimmed with swan's down, and had wrapped a thin cloudy scarf about her head and neck. She paused on the threshold, and regarded Dr. Ford and her aunt with a sort of shyness. Both felt as if she were transfigured before their eyes. No one had ever before seen her features so alive with meaning. Her very complexion had grown dazzling: the vivid flame of her lips, the flush on her cheeks, and the brilliancy of her eyes, invested her with a terrible beauty which shook Alan to the very soul.

She merely bowed in answer to his salutation, and would have left the room ; but he detained her.

"I want to speak to you, Katharine," he said.

She came slowly towards him, and stood opposite on the rug.

"I have an engagement at half-past six," she returned, glancing at the clock. "I must go and dress."

"Give me five minutes. I want to congratulate you. Mrs. Eliot has informed me of your engagement."

Alan's voice was hoarse, and his face showed emotion. He had some terror lest he should lose all his self-command ; for over and beyond the fact that Katharine was to marry Truax was the crueller revelation that this new experience had carried her to heights of feeling of which he had believed her incapable. His disappointment, his humiliation, were hardly to be borne.

She drooped her wet, brilliant eyes.

"Aunt Jane was a little premature. She had no right to make any confidences concerning the matter," she murmured.

"Are you not engaged to Truax?"

"I suppose I am."

"God speed you to your happiness, Kate !" Alan cried sharply. "I know that you love him : you have loved him all the time. Tell me the truth : from the first moment you saw him, have you not loved him?"

She did not answer, except to flush more deeply.

"And has he loved you as well?" Alan went on in a dreadful voice.

She looked at him proudly.

"This is the first real happiness I have ever had, Alan," she returned. "Don't begrudge it to me."

He controlled himself. He had felt a sudden fury, but where was the use of visiting his wrath at his own failure upon another? He sent her a kind glance.

"I begrudge you nothing, Kate," said he. "Once I warned you against the consequences of yielding to a passion for this man. I told you it would bring you to grief. To-day I withdraw all such ominous predictions. I can have no doubt of his loving you: I hope he may study how to make you happy. I am certain of one thing, — that his affection is disinterested, that he cares nothing about your money."

"No, he cares nothing about my money."

"Will he be a good father to your children?"

"Don't talk of that!" cried Katharine impatiently. "Naturally the idea of such a relation is a ludicrous absurdity to him. Don't thrust the poor children upon him, as you are always thrusting them upon me. You will make me hate them finally."

"Good God! Don't say such a thing."

She had flung out her words with such unwonted vehemence, that he gazed at her, shocked and alarmed.

"My first marriage was dreadful to me," she went on, trying to extenuate the fact that she had a past by reproaching her fate. "I did not want to marry: but I had no money; I owed Mr. Warrington every thing. What else was I to do when he became possessed with the idea of making me his wife? I respected him; I loved nobody better; I had never seen any one who in the least degree stirred my

heart. -- I never wanted a child. -- I dare say you think it shocking for me to make this confession ; but now that I know what it really is to love, and to think of marriage, I hate the weary lies of the past seven years, and would cast them off if I could. Don't remind me of the old bondage, which must go on hampering me still. It is so humiliating that I must ask to be forgiven for thrusting unwelcome and unmeaning ties upon the man who asks me to be his wife ! ”

“ You are all the dearer, to a man who really loves you, for ” —

She interrupted him with half-scornful good-nature.

“ Oh, you are a different person, Alan ! ”

“ That I am. You don't begin to know how different. You don't need to point out his superiority. He is the man who has won you.”

Katharine did not reply except by a smile, then pointed to the clock, and left the room.

THE WHOLE DUTY OF A PÈRE DE FAMILLE.

EMINENT lawyers are apt to mismanage their own cases ; and, as we have seen, Truax, trained to caution and subtlety, had finally committed himself with a vengeance. The temptation of finding out just how much influence he possessed over a beautiful woman had been too powerful to be foregone. He had never dreamed of marrying, — above all, of marrying Mrs. Warrington. All that he had thought about was, that she was a magnificent creature, and that a peculiar charm lurked in her inconsistencies. He had never seen a woman of the world with half her stateliness, nor a child with such absolute want of self-control. He had enjoyed her struggles to maintain her grand air before him, which a word or look could turn into an enchanting failure. In tentative intercourse of this sort between the two sexes, fresh elements are apt to play their part ; so that Truax, wholly ignoring the fact at the outset that flirtation is a progressive amusement, now found himself pledged for an un conjectured future full of all sorts of unpredicted possibilities.

He walked away from — Square the engaged husband of a rich widow with two children. He was not certain whether he looked upon Mrs. Eliot's sudden invasion and congratulations as ill-timed, or as

a prompt help in a crisis which he might otherwise have wavered before, and allowed to drift away. She had put his position before him in the clearest light.

Of all men in the world, he would least have expected himself to be guilty of such rash, reckless, and inconsiderate love-making. He had no valid plea to urge in his own behalf. He was not in love : never for one moment had he begun to fancy that he was in love. The whole experience had piqued and fascinated his imagination, while his heart had remained unmoved. But analyzing his conduct and its results, he decided that such enviable success proved his course to have been wise, so resolved to set about falling in love without delay, in order that a tardy sentiment might gild and disguise actions rather thoughtless and impertinent.

Certainly, if a man were to marry, marriage could hardly be offered under more desirable conditions. His preference might have pointed in a different direction : he would not have chosen a rich woman, nor would he have been attracted by a widow, — above all, a widow with children. He had made money himself, feeling ambitious to accumulate a respectable fortune. Such motives, which had hitherto inspired his best energies, must of course be neutralized by his union with Mrs. Warrington. He wished to himself that Katharine had been a penniless young girl : his heart would have been touched by the thought that she was dependent upon him, while his powers might have been stimulated to their highest.

Ever and again he was forced to ponder anew the

monstrous, the immeasurable surprise of the fact that he actually was an engaged man, that these interests and excitements belonged to his own life. At the least stirring of regret, he promptly told himself it was too late to assign weight to such considerations: he had distinctly committed himself to this position; and, if it proved difficult, he must confront its difficulties and dangers, and discharge his smallest obligations. No doubt, he reflected philosophically, no doubt, there might be compensations.

Truax had declared that he hated the thought of their engagement becoming one of the small surprises of the day: hence, for the present, it was to be kept a secret, and only Mr. Marston and Dr. Ford were to be taken into confidence. It so happened, that the old lawyer dropped in at the office the very next morning, and gave Truax a convenient opportunity for disclosing his bit of personal news. Mr. Marston came to make some suggestion concerning the Gordon case, which promised a winter of tireless litigation. After fifteen minutes of sharp questions from Truax, and slow rejoinders from his visitor, the conversation flagged. No further words were necessary, yet each seemed to be waiting for something.

Truax decided to go at the subject without pre-
amble.

"I called upon our client, Marston. You will be glad to know that she has decided not to leave New York at present."

"I am pleased," returned Mr. Marston with much complacency, "that she has come to so satisfactory a conclusion."

He evidently expected to hear more ; but Truax suddenly remembered, with a startled consciousness, that he might seem to have cut the ground away from beneath his colleague's feet. Had he not rallied Mr. Marston upon his evident partiality for the fair widow ?

"I hope," said the old gentleman, after waiting patiently for a time, "that, if you advanced any arguments to induce Mrs. Warrington to remain in New York, you mentioned me, and my unqualified regrets at"—

"Marston," interrupted Truax abruptly, "I did not mention you at all. Subjects of more personal and particular interest were discussed between us. Mrs. Warrington is now engaged to be married."

Mr. Marston cleared his throat with a sound of defiance.

"I suppose I need hardly mention the name of the fortunate man," Truax went on.

With an awful look of contemptuous indignation, Mr. Marston returned, —

"I will not believe that she is engaged to Dr. Alan Ford. Never, sir, never ! Three weeks ago Mrs. Warrington expressly told me that she had no intention of marrying him."

"Nor has she," said Truax dryly. "She is going to marry me."

"Marry you ? I do not like jests on such a subject.

"Nor I. I am far enough from joking."

"You are in earnest ?"

"I am."

"She is to become your wife ?"

"She is."

Mr. Marston gave a defiant snort.

"The thing is unprecedented, sir, — unprecedented. How many times have you seen her?"

"Not many. The introduction counted for a good deal, and you know who introduced us."

"I never," declared the old lawyer forcibly, — "I never had the smallest intention of" —

"Of course you had not."

"Business is business" —

"Exactly. My acquaintance with Mrs. Warrington was not a matter of business, but of sentiment."

Once convinced that Truax was not diverting himself with paradoxical absurdities, and that the engagement was an actual, though a pestilent reality, Mr. Marston assumed a look of grim unconcern, and stared straight before him.

"It is an odd result to follow an action of ejection," pursued Truax blandly; "but it really seems to have been brought about in that way. When I think, Marston, how easily you might have engaged a different lawyer, I fairly shudder at the thought of what the consequences might have been."

"I can have no idea how this result has been brought about. The thing is unprecedented in my experience, — wholly unprecedented," said Mr. Marston in the most freezing tone. He rose at the same time, looking more than ever tall, thin, and angular. "As for shuddering at possible consequences," he said with an ominous smile, "it is as well to look at consequences which are tangible things."

Truax burst out laughing.

"Candidly, Marston, you consider Mrs. Warrington has made a bad choice," said he. "Come, now, what fault do you find with me?"

"You are not sufficiently serious to become the husband of any woman," returned Mr. Marston. "As for Mrs. Warrington, when I think of her requirements and her" — He paused a moment, then glanced at the younger man with another of his peculiar smiles. "I can at least congratulate my client on having secured the devotion of the most eminent of her counsel," he said, then with a nod went out, and down the stairs into the street, all hope and joy having flatly vanished from his existence.

Mr. Marston's illusions were of a sort which it had seemed charitable to wink at, and afterwards to laugh over; but Truax had a rather heavy heart as to what Alan Ford might say or do concerning his engagement. He experienced remorse at the thought that he might appear to have robbed and despoiled any man, and above all the doctor, towards whom he had the kindest feelings. He looked for Ford all day, and was not surprised to see him come in at three o'clock.

"Come ye in peace, or come ye in war?" he asked grinily, just lifting his eyes from his writing.

"You seem to have a bad conscience," returned Alan, with a poor sort of laugh. "Of course, man, I've come to congratulate you."

"You are the best fellow in the world!" Truax exclaimed, pushing away his work, and settling back in his chair. "Sit down, Ford, and we will have a talk.

Thank you for congratulating me. I am well aware that I am a most fortunate man."

The visitor took a seat on the other side of the table, so that they were face to face. Truax noticed an appearance of pallor in the other; while Alan, on his part, decided, that, for an exceptionally lucky man, the lawyer looked dull and out of sorts.

"I suppose it took you by surprise," said Truax, who always had his share of inquisitiveness, besides a habit of getting at other men's secret thoughts.

"No," returned Alan, "I was not surprised."

"Well, I confess that *I* was," retorted Truax unexpectedly. Then, growing more serious, he added in some haste, "As I said before, I know that I am the most fortunate of men. She is a delightful creature."

"You don't know her very well yet," said Alan dryly.

"I am aware of my deficiencies in that respect, so have secured an unlimited opportunity for getting better acquainted with her."

Alan glanced at him, then looked away.

"Candidly," said Truax. "You don't think I deserve this unique treasure which has dropped into my life."

Alan continued silent for a time, and seemed making up his mind what to say. His companion, feeling sure that he had so far tolerably sustained his own part in the somewhat trying dialogue, did not offer to help him.

"I have known Katharine ever since she was a little girl," the doctor finally said. "I am but three years her senior. I saw her constantly in my cousin's

house. I sha'n't try to hide the fact from you that I admire her, and have always admired her more than any one in the world. But do me the justice to believe in the disinterestedness of my affection. It turns out that you are the man she has chosen to make her happy. If you do make her happy, I shall rejoice, — I shall rejoice, I say."

"I will try to make her happy," Truax returned. He leaned his arms on the table, and bent his chin upon them. "Ford," said he, "before you came in, I was wondering if you would enter with a declaration of war. I dreaded lest you might accuse me of a want of fairness in the matter. How long is it since I was offering the field to you?"

"We won't discuss that, if you please," said Alan. "Of course I would have married her if I could."

"I can't bear to feel," pursued Truax, "that I have wronged any man alive. The value and sacredness of fresh ties would be seriously impaired, if I thought I had injured your chances."

"Don't," retorted Alan; "don't!" He put up his hand. "She has always been cold to me, — cold as those snowflakes." He pointed to the window. It was a boisterous, squally November day, and foreboded an early winter. Still Alan's comparison was a trifle ludicrous; for nobody could suspect that the snowflakes would be as unmelting as icicles on Diana's temples. Truax, always swift to receive a humorous suggestion, could not resist a smile. The doctor was shocked.

"Don't laugh," said he vehemently; "don't make light of it. That is why I am here, why I forced

myself to come to-day. I am haunted by the fear that you are not likely to accept your engagement seriously enough. Marriage is a terrible responsibility for a man to undertake."

"Not take it seriously enough?" repeated Truax, elevating his eyebrows ever so little. "That is what Marston told me. The danger is, that I shall take it too seriously. I have been thinking about it all day, and trying to make out where I stand. All I have been looking forward to and aiming at seems to be in danger of crumbling to pieces."

Alan stared at him blankly. "How so?"

"I am afraid I shall lose all incentive to effort. I shall grow fat and lazy, and care about my dinners. Frankly, I don't like marrying a rich woman."

Alan was in earnest himself, so could readily understand that Truax was not. He knew that the lawyer was a clever talker, who relieved himself by paradox and pungent satire. He hesitated before speaking again. He felt the importance of making no mistakes; yet, as he confessed, he suffered from the conviction that Katharine was wasting her love on a man who did not reward her with single-hearted passion. He had seen her that morning, blushing and quivering at every sound, looking with eager expectation at every entrance, expecting her lover. Yet here was the lover, in a mood the very reverse of joyful anticipation. To a different man from Alan there would have been a gleam of hope in his presentiment that this engagement did not rest upon a solid basis. All he felt, however, was a dread of any possible unhappiness for Katharine.

"Promise me, Truax," he said, "that you will try to make her happy."

Truax flushed a little. He was irritated.

"My dear fellow, I just told you that I would try to make her happy," he retorted.

Alan shook his head with dreary persistence.

"I don't want polite formulas," said he. "I want to see you taking it seriously."

"What more can I say than that I have the best intentions? Good God! What do you dread for her? I don't pretend to superlative goodness; but, as men go, I may be called a tolerably decent specimen. I'm not so young as to have many latent vices, and you know what my life has been so far. I dare say my temper is hasty, but I have myself pretty well in hand by this time. What do you require of me?"

"Women need a boundless sympathy," said Alan.

Truax interrupted him with a suppressed ejaculation, which he did not repeat, although invited to do so. Alan resumed, —

"You have always occupied yourself with general matters. You have had no concern with the many details, petty but important, of actual things. You have had no sympathy with the realities of private, domestic life, which are made up of tender, sacred littlenesses. It will be necessary for you to" — Alan broke off, his voice trembling and deepened.

"Ford," said Truax, grasping his hand with a tremendous grip, "it is evident to me that you were born without original sin. You are a far better fellow than I am, and you would have made Mrs. Warring-

ton a better husband than I shall. Still don't utterly despair of me. A man is inclined to judge system-wise of institutions he never entered. You can hardly expect me to fasten on nice particulars all at once. You know what my views have been. There's no harm in being candid. Matrimony always seemed to me the very devil of a burden for a man to carry about with him. Of course I now begin to understand that such a weight may be a pleasure, —like old Anchises, bearing down the shoulders of Æneas. Better the aches and pains of such pious devotion than all the joyless freedom of the world. I swear to you I will be as tender and considerate a husband as I find out how to be."

"I'm certain you will," said Alan, with an effort at cheerfulness, but with little alacrity. He kept gazing at the other, as if either puzzled or fascinated.

"It might have been better," pursued Truax, "if things had been allowed to take a slower and surer course. It never suited me to be coerced into doing any thing."

"Coerced!" exclaimed Alan.

"I allude to circumstances, —of course to circumstances," explained the other promptly; then, after a time, added dubitatively, "No doubt it is all best as it is. She's a delightful creature."

"The thing was hastily conceived and accomplished: that is evident."

"It was accomplished before it was conceived," mused Truax. "I suppose," he remarked after a long pause, "that it is characteristic of men to find

the aftertaste of any experience a little flat. A man obeys an impulse whose force he recognizes at the time, then, next day, looks coolly at his actions, and wonders how under heaven he could have been" —

"I trust you are generalizing, Truax," said Alan. He had risen, and now, coming round, put his hand on the other's shoulder. "You wouldn't say such a thing unless you had an abominable trick of hasty generalizations. You must not talk in that way. It doesn't sound honorable."

"That is right," exclaimed Truax, "pitch into me."

"Have you seen Katharine to-day?" asked Alan.

"No, not yet. I am to dine with my cousin, Mrs. Lyon, but shall make a point of calling on my way up town."

"Dine with Mrs. Lyon?" gasped Alan, looking at the office-clock, which pointed to twenty minutes past four.

"Come now, why not? I'm not cut off from my family dinners so soon, am I? It reminds me of a friend of mine in Paris. The last time I was there I ran upon him, and, as we hadn't met for two years, asked him to come and dine with me. He consented; but no sooner had he taken his seat than he started up, smiting his forehead, and declared he must go home. 'I can't stay,' said he, '*Mon Dieu!* I had forgotten. I have the misfortune to be married.'"

Alan did not relish the story.

"You are a law unto yourself," he said without a smile. "Still, for a man who has been engaged only twenty-four hours" —

Truax frowned: he felt himself lectured and tutored.

"My cousin, Mrs. Lyon, has the little Gordon girl staying with her," said he. "I have met her before, and promised to go to see her as soon as she came to town."

"How old is Miss Gordon?"

"Oh! young, very young. It would not be right for me to break the engagement: she depends on me."

No doubt but what Truax's conclusions were as sound as the premises admitted. Alan ventured to make no further suggestions.

"Good-by," said he, taking leave. "I suppose your engagement — your engagement of marriage, I mean — will not be a long one."

"I fancy not."

"Shall you be married before the winter?"

"Before the winter?" ejaculated Truax. "It is already November."

He shook hands with his visitor, opened the door, and closed it behind him, then returned, and stood for a moment in the centre of the room in steady thought. "Good heavens!" he then exclaimed to himself, — "good heavens!" and began to walk about, fretting and fuming, thinking over the tiresomeness of interference and meddlesomeness. He was not angry with Alan, being clear-sighted enough to recognize his real disinterestedness.

What rankled was the allusion to a speedy marriage. Was it really expected that he should resign his freedom at once? The idea carried with it sharp

discontent at his predicament. His anxiety evoked a vision,—an echo of all the matrimonial infelicities of which he had ever heard. Having had few illusions of his own, he had derived huge amusement from the disillusionments of other men. One after another of his friends had been melted like wax in the crucible of domestic life. It was generally conceded that no woman alive has a rational standard, and that a man's wife is one of those circumstances over which he has no control. Truax, forecasting the results of his sudden engagement, began to feel already pulled hither and thither by delicate bridles, governing his tastes, his habits, his inclinations. Hereafter a rigid punctuality would compel him to adjust his convenience to his meals, not his meals to his convenience: there could no longer be any latitude in the question of morning-coats and neckties,—no blurred vision for disagreeable social duties. He saw himself, in imagination, yawning through evenings at his own fireside, and confessed to his heart that he had not only no talent for the domestic, but an insurmountable aversion to it.

But a wise drinker does not shake the bottle, he leaves the dregs at the bottom.

A sudden thought occurred to him; and, going to the door, he called to one of his clerks, "Ask Mr. Jasper to step here."

In another moment Mr. Jasper entered. "I was afraid you might be going," said Truax, and began talking to him vigorously and lucidly about the Gordon case. No one better understood the advantage

of hammering obvious truths by dint of the clearest explanations into the heads of his subordinates. His skill did not fail him now, when he was fabricating hypothetical facts for the purpose of stunning Jasper. When the young man turned to leave the room, he called, as if with after-thought, —

“Oh, by the way, hold on a moment !”

“Well, Mr. Truax.”

“I show little enough sympathy in your private life, my dear fellow. I always mean to ask how your love-affair is getting on. When do you intend to be married ?”

“Not until next autumn,” returned Jasper with pleasant confusion.

“Quite a long engagement.”

“Only two years.”

Truax pondered a moment.

“There seems to me an excessive premeditation about an engagement of two years,” he remarked presently, after momentarily admitting the idea of so enormous a relief to all his present perplexities.

“But when a man is constantly looking forward” —

“In that case he must run the risk of discounting the delights of marriage with one particular woman, and long for some novelty. No doubt there is a difference between men.”

“No doubt,” acquiesced Jasper, proud of his exceptional constancy.

“There is a *juste milieu* for every thing,” pursued Truax. “Now, how long is an average engagement ?”

“It would be hard to strike an average. My brother Tom was engaged only four weeks.”

“*Good God!*”

Jasper glanced at his senior with some surprise at such apparently uncalled-for vehemence, then super-added, —

“My sister Jane was also married after an engagement of less than six weeks.”

Truax cast an irritated look at his enlightener.

“Such haste is preposterous, indecent,” said he with exasperation. “I am certain it cannot rationally be expected of a man that he shall rush into marriage with undignified frenzy.”

“Most men are glad enough to have their wedding-day accelerated, and” —

“Any sensible man prefers to act with deliberation,” rejoined Truax. He must have had some system of matrimonial probabilities which he wished to test ; for he now encouraged Jasper to give an account of the length of every engagement he happened to have known any thing about. This little investigation proved highly satisfactory. Truax had been carelessly scribbling with a pencil all the time the young man was talking ; and, when he was left alone, he took a piece of paper, copied off his notes clearly, and made a general average. We give his calculation entire : —

					MONTHS.
Jasper's engagement	.	.	.	.	24
“ brother's engagement	.	.	.	.	1
“ sister's	“	.	.	.	1½
“ father's	“	.	.	.	7½
“ uncle's	“	.	.	.	6
“ 1st friend's	“	.	.	.	14
“ 2d “	“	.	.	.	8

Jasper's 3d friend's engagement	3
" 4th " "	2
" 5th " "	1
" 6th " "	9
" 7th " "	13
	<hr/>
	12)90
	<hr/>
	7½

Average duration, seven months and fifteen days.

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He regarded these results with some complacency. It might have been repugnant to him to confess to Katharine, or even to Alan Ford, the grounds for his opinion that his engagement ought not to culminate under at least seven months and a half; but to himself his reasoning appeared thoroughly logical.

DORIS FINDS THE BALL AT HER FEET.

WE gladly chronicle the fact that Truax did not reach Mrs. Lyon's that evening. There is sometimes a higher consistency in omission of duties than in fulfilment ; and, although he had accepted his cousin's invitation to dinner, he found it best, as well as pleasantest, to remain with Katharine. Two nights later, however, after leaving — Square, he bent his steps toward Madison Avenue, where the Lyons lived. It was in quite a different quarter of the town ; and he had time to think, not only of his parting kiss to his *fiancée*, but of Doris Gordon as well, while traversing the intervening streets. He had frequently thought of the little girl of late : ever since that day at the sea-side his mind had a trick of lingering on some of her odd notions and speculations. Twice he had awakened in the morning with the sound of her laugh in his ears ; and he was conscious of the sound having been inspiriting, even stimulating. He felt anxious to see her in scenes so different from the pathetic and dreary gentilities of her home, and believed that it might be in his power to help her. Poor child ! To bring her out in a house like Mrs. Lyon's, without resources of education or training, was like sending a raw recruit into battle without ammunition.

Mrs. Lyon stood at the top of the stairs, and watched him ascend.

"Oh ! is it you, cousin John?" she cried unceremoniously, and with some pique in her manner. "I am much obliged to you for condescending to come at all."

"Am I so late?"

"Why did you not come to my dinner the day before yesterday? Have you bought a piece of ground, or five yoke of oxen, or married a wife, that you were obliged to send a message at the eleventh hour, that you begged to be excused?"

Truax laughed to himself. He wondered what his cousin would say if she knew how nearly she had grazed the truth.

"I am sorry you missed me. So you don't want me to-night? I should think not. You told me this was to be a family party."

"Certainly this is a family party. Bless your stars that you have so many nice connections. Not a soul here but is a blood relation of either James's or mine. Next week, or so, I shall give Doris a 'tea,' and invite all the world; but I wanted two private views first. Night before last we had the *chaperones* and fogies, and this evening we have the young people. We want to profit by the opinions of the family critics. James is delighted with her,—declares she shall have a regularly stunning coming-out ball in January."

Mrs. Lyon had led her cousin into the rooms; and they now stood under the arch, and looked down the suite at the party of young people talking and dancing. The hostess was a pretty, sprightly woman of about middle age, immersed in society, living for it, know-

ing nothing else, and spending all her thought and energies upon it. What she enjoyed in life was developing the resources of any situation in which she happened to find herself. She formed no vague schemes, made no idle professions, but took up her duties, and performed them with a conscientious fixedness of purpose, from which she was rarely forced to deviate through any failure in her plans.

"I wanted you at that dinner," she pursued, indulging her petulance. "'Tis not often that I have rested with security upon your co-operation; but you promised so faithfully to come. The result was, that, although the dinner was excellent, we were all a little dull."

"The idea of inviting me with *chaperones* and fogies!"

"You could have infused spirit into the whole affair."

"I am very much obliged to you; but, if you wanted me to talk to a set of pompous old noodles, I don't in the least lament my absence. Why under heaven you women sacrifice time and money, and elaborations of taste and skill, on such things, as you do, I never can make out. It would be all very well if the people you invited met each other, and enjoyed themselves; but they don't care for it, neither do you. I grow every day more and more astonished at the universal dullness which pervades that proportion of mankind who set out to enjoy life."

"It's not so bad. I'm not dull, and you're not dull."

"I don't set out to enjoy life. I should be horribly dull if I went to dinners, and sat by fashionable women."

"There's no good in your abusing my dinners when you stay away from them. Neither is there any good in your coming to-night. However you may abhor dinner-parties, there's at least one thing to reconcile you to them,—you can eat. Now, to-night I have nothing to offer you. I know you detest dancing; and there's no supper, only ices and cakes and champagne-cup. You may as well go away."

"I'll go presently. I want to see the little Gordon first."

"It is not very consistent for you to take an interest in her when you are doing your best to spoil her chances of a fortune."

"Oh, you must find a fortune for her!"

"I mean to do so. I shall give her a very good time, and not let too serious considerations have their way at first. But, of course, she must marry, and marry very young."

"Pick out a good husband for her. Don't insist on her making a brilliant match. She has it in her to be very happy. Let her be happy in her own way."

It was quite evident that Mrs. Lyon was regarding the subject with a fine, discriminating judgment.

"I have not made up my mind yet," she said. "I am always biassed in favor of brilliant matches. Still, in Doris's case there are many points to be considered. She has a lover already."

"Indeed! I'm glad to hear it. Who is he?"

"Young Decker, son of the lawyer : in fact, young Decker is a lawyer himself."

"I dare say I've seen the young man. Old Decker and I barely speak, but I don't think he is an out-and-out bad fellow. So the son is in love with her. I dare say," Truax added with a shrewd guess, "that this circumstance explains the lawsuit."

"I don't know about that. I have not made up my mind yet how much the young man ought to be encouraged. He is completely fascinated with Doris."

"And does Doris fancy him?"

"She is too young to look at things seriously. She certainly likes him."

"Now, I call all that very fortunate," said Truax. "Marry her to him by all means."

"I have inquired about him. He is a good fellow ; his habits are creditable ; he's no trifter ; he is evidently ardently in love ; his father's means are considerable, and he is an only child, and succeeds to the business. Still it is an average match, and I like to have such a girl do her best. She is clever ; she has plenty of ideas : the bloom is not rubbed off the peach in the least. If I were a man, I should fall in love with just such a girl. She's so fresh !"

"Keep her fresh by marrying her off at once. Where is she now?"

"She is dancing."

"Does she know how to dance?"

"Just wait and see."

"Who taught her in that desert? You never saw such a spot as Gordon's Point, Bessy."

"Yes: James went down after her, and declared it was the jumping-off place. But it makes no difference where a girl is brought up, provided she is brought up properly. I look at her sometimes, and wonder how she does it: still there's no doubt of her being charming."

Truax leaned against the wall, and watched for the young girl. He had retained a clear vision of her, which Mrs. Lyon's rose-colored account in no wise disturbed. He could recall her as he had seen her at the Point, — the stuff gown of dark blue, the loose waist belted in, the skirt falling in heavy untrimmed folds to the ankles, the black straw hat, its flapping brim tied down with a blue ribbon, the golden curls on her shoulders.

"Poor little thing!" he exclaimed to himself with good-natured pity, thinking of her rustic air. He felt angry with the groups of girls on every hand who must surpass and cruelly extinguish little Doris. Then, out of the turmoil of the dancing crowd, gradually emerged a single figure whose look and movement so attracted him, that he bent his gaze on her, forgetting the rest.

"Do you call that dancing?" demanded Mrs. Lyon.

"Yes, I call that dancing. Who is she?"

"Don't you know her?"

"No. She is a very perfect creature."

"Why, John, it is Doris Gordon!"

"Impossible!"

"Oh! but it is. You never saw her properly dressed before. There, the music is stopping. Go and speak to her. It is only Willy Lyon she is dancing with."

Truax obeyed, with a curious sort of hesitation, far enough from reluctance. He had a critical taste in beauty, and Doris to-night seemed a distinct answer to all his old ideals. She was tall, slight, virginal in figure and aspect, her forehead airy and pure, her hair blonde: her face was radiant with a caressing smile which lent her the cherubic charm of a child. Her long black eyes and black lashes determined the character of her face, giving it an intensity which heightened the effect of every feature. Her looks had challenged every sort of criticism; and the question whether she was beautiful, or not beautiful, had formed the staple of conversation all the evening. All that it is necessary for our story to prove, however, is, that Truax found her supreme in that attractiveness which draws us with or without our consent. While he advanced slowly towards her, she turned and smiled at him. He experienced a subdued excitement in merely moving nearer and nearer.

"You have come at last, then," she cried, extending her hands ardently and artlessly. "They told me it was exactly like you never to come,—that I must not count on seeing you."

Her words broke the spell of his surprise and his over-powerful admiration. She was again a *naïve* child, and no woman at all. He held her hand, and looked down at her with a half-amused, half-tender look of pride and satisfaction. He was frankly delighted that she was, to his eyes at least, as correctly dressed as any girl in the room. He regarded with a sort of rapture the details of her blue silk gown with its

square-cut corsage, even the bunch of rosebuds nestling in the frills of lace.

"And all the time," said he, laughing, "you were a grown woman, yet let me go on believing you to be a little girl."

"I am seventeen," declared Doris. "Was I to tell you how old I was on first seeing you?"

"At least we had a good time that morning."

"I did, sir."

"I'm certain I did. I had, besides, a royal dinner afterwards, from which you staid away, so that I had no chance of thanking you for it."

"Oh! I assisted at that dinner, Mr. Truax."

"The best dinner I ever had in my life," he pursued. "First there were oysters, then" —

"Oh! I know all about it, sir," cried Doris; and they both burst into laughter.

More people knew John Truax than John Truax knew. He was not, perhaps, on speaking terms with a dozen people in the rooms, yet every one recognized him; and the lookers-on were not slow in attaching some peculiar importance to his ostentatious interest in Doris. The two continued to stand exactly where they had greeted each other, unconscious or indifferent to the fact that they were in everybody's way, and that the waltzers thus lost a third of their circle. The extraordinary *naïveté*, not only of Doris, but of Truax as well, disarmed criticism. It was not only that she gazed up at him with the rosy joy of a child, but that he looked down equally flushed and smiling. He asked her question after question about

herself: the least details of the life of which he had seen her making a part seemed invested with interest for him.

How many days had she been in town, he demanded. Only three, but three too many until she had told him all she had done from morning till night. He was jealous to learn her first impressions concerning every thing. She had twice driven in the Park, and one pleasant afternoon had sauntered through the Ramble. "With whom?" — "Oh! with uncle James." Truax could bear that; but then it came out that one of the Lyon cousins was there, and went a mile to obtain bread for her to feed the swans. He frowned at this. Where else? Oh! to the shops, — to Arnold's and Stewart's and Tiffany's. Wonderful places: never had she dreamed that any thing could be so splendid. If she had to buy ornaments or dresses there, she was certain that she should never, never, know what to choose. Yet aunt Bessy had found fault because there was nothing to suit her, while on every hand were the most beautiful things that mind or heart of woman could conceive. Oh, such a life as it was to be here in New York! Every thing was so bright and joyous, every one was so gay and witty! Every sight was a pageant, every meal a feast. The climax of all delight had been an evening at the theatre. That was distinctly an experience. Rose-flushed as Doris's cheeks had been before, they took a deeper tint now, and her dark eyes gained fire as she told about the play; but then it was no mere play. What she had seen was

life, — enchanted, intensified, impassioned life. She made an effort to tell him the story, then broke off with a sort of sob. It was all of no use, she declared ; he must see it for himself : no mere description could express the power, depth, and sweetness of that play. Her very lease of life seemed dependent on its happy conclusion, yet it came near going all wrong. Truax must see it at once, she insisted imperiously — he must go and see it the very next night. It was impossible to conceive the reprehensible indifference which had kept him away from such fairyland, such heaven, when he was in the same city where the play had been going on every evening for a month.

Truax promised to go.

“But I shall insist that you go with me, Miss Gordon,” he added, without thinking of certain other obligations in a different quarter of the town. “I will take a box, and ask my cousin to make up a party.”

While this conversation progressed, Mrs. Lyon had grown more and more uncomfortable ; but, liking to humor her cousin, she found an excuse for letting it stretch to the utmost limit which others’ forbearance would reach. The dancing had lost its spirit : everybody had paused to look at Doris. There could no longer be any doubt about her beauty. The scene was very pretty to watch ; but it inspired curiosity, and elicited conjectures, and, if it continued, would shortly cause a laugh.

Mrs. Lyon went up to Doris, and took her hand.

“Tired of dancing, my dear ? ” she asked. “Here

is Mr. Decker saying that you have remorselessly flung him over."

"I? Oh, dear, no!" returned Doris with cheerful alacrity. "Is it time for our dance yet, Mr. Decker?"

Mr. Decker, a tall and rather good-looking young man, replied that he had been waiting for her, and had insisted that the music should wait her convenience as well.

"You shall not wait any longer," remarked Mrs. Lyon.

Doris looked up at Truax out of the corners of her dark eyes, —

"And you don't mind my going?" she said, laughing.

"I mind it very much," retorted Truax.

"Go and dance, young people," interposed the hostess vigorously: "and then, Mr. Decker, take my niece to supper; people have been going up and down for this last half-hour. — My dear Doris, I will take care of my cousin John."

Truax looked as if such intentions were purely gratuitous, and made no response to Mrs. Lyon's disinterested efforts to enliven him. He all at once felt moody: he wanted to go away.

"Really, Bessy," he exclaimed after a time, "I can't congratulate you upon your success as a *chaperone*. I don't know what you mean by letting a young girl like that go about freely with a parcel of young men you know nothing whatever about."

"Go about freely with a parcel of young men, John? I can't think to what you are alluding."

"You allowed her to dance with that lad, and go down to supper with him afterwards."

"That is Mr. George Decker, whom you were just a moment ago counselling me to bring forward as Doris's suitor."

"I had not seen him, then," growled Truax, who had all at once discovered his cousin to be coarse-minded, the party dull, life in general stale and unprofitable.

"What fault do you find with him?"

"I might better ask what virtue you see in him, that you want to give him a delightful young creature like that."

"Oh! of course, no man is good enough for Doris. No man ever was good enough for a charming girl; but we have to accommodate ourselves to circumstances. He can offer her every thing."

"Candidly I don't see how. He certainly has not got every thing."

"He is good-looking" —

"Pah! As if such good looks counted. He resembles a dry-goods clerk."

"Nonsense. He is rich" —

"Would you sell her for a price?"

"Travelled: he has been all over Europe."

"That is always the way. Even in Congreve's time he declared the crying need of an act of Parliament to save the credit of the nation, and prohibit the exportation of fools."

"He is kind and good — in short, a nice fellow."

"Don't let him marry Doris," said Truax sharply. "The idea is monstrous."

"Whom shall she marry?" cried Mrs. Lyon plaintively, looking at him all the time with a lazy smile.

"Let her go to a nunnery. Knowing men as I do, I can't bear to hear the suggestion of marriage for any one like her."

Mrs. Lyon opened her eyes to their widest, then closed them, and, with an air of understanding every thing in heaven and earth, shrugged her shoulders. Truax continued silent, and she set herself to the thankless task of combating his ill-humor. She talked incessantly, told all the news, and all her plans for the coming season, and invited him to dine sociably with her the next evening, and afterwards act as escort for herself and Doris to some place of amusement. To this suggestion Truax vouchsafed the only attention he had so far granted to her remarks, although he did not positively accept it. Finally the energetic hostess led her guest down stairs.

"Perhaps we shall find Doris," she remarked shrewdly.

Her surmise was correct. Doris was in the dining-room, the centre of a group of young people, eating cream and bon-bons. Mr. George Decker was attending to her wants with a frank solicitude which offered no opportunity for a rival to present himself. Truax could not interfere, and not only did not approach Doris, but did not apparently glance towards her. He acquitted himself of every possible duty towards Mrs. Lyon, then prepared to follow her up stairs. Turning at the door, he looked back, and caught the expression of the young girl's eyes.

He returned at once, and went up to her.

"Did you enjoy your dance?" he asked with unnecessary gravity.

"Very much. I love to dance."

He made no response.

"I suppose," she said tentatively, "that you don't care to dance."

"What are your grounds for such a supposition?"

"You are too old, too wise, to care for such things."

Truax was far from considering her remark amusing, but he smiled blandly.

"So I seem to you very old?"

Without answering him in words at first, she looked up and smiled, then, after a silence, said, —

"Not old, only old enough to be wiser than I am."

"I don't feel at all wise to-night, in spite of my age."

"Did you ever dance?"

"It used to be the end of my existence. I wonder if I could do it again."

Doris flashed her eyes up at him.

"Do dance, — dance with me!" she cried. "They all say I dance very well. You are sure not to repent it."

There are two ways of repenting things. Truax found her such a partner, that he realized for the first time in his life why Strauss was born to write waltzes.

Still it may be that some other form of repentance lurked in ambush for him.

GORDON *vs.* WARRINGTON.

THERE are blunders and blunders. Every man is liable to make blunders, but it must be confessed that so far our hero's blundering has been too systematic. The difference between him and a man actually in love was, that the latter knows definitely what it is that he wants ; while, up to the present time, at least, Truax had caught only fugitive and flitting glimpses of either his requirements or desires.

The morning after he had met Miss Gordon at his cousin's, he received this note from Mrs. Warrington. It was the first love-letter that any woman had ever written to him ; and, since a first love-letter ought to be an experience beyond the common, we give hers entire.

16 — SQUARE, THURSDAY.

MY DEAREST JOHN, — I was so happy last evening after you left me, that I continued to sit until past midnight on the same sofa, behind the table covered with flowers. I thought over all your words and all your looks. I laughed a little to find the rose I had given you under the cushion. I recollected how you laid it down, and forgot to pick it up again. It is easy for me to forgive a little seeming indifference so long as you hold me in your heart. While I sat thinking of you, I found myself questioning the solitude. I imagined you in your rooms, over your books and papers. "Does he love me at this moment? Is he thinking of me now?" I kept saying to myself. Don't fancy that I doubt you. It is the nature of a woman's love always

to be reaching out to discover if she is actually beloved, always to be quivering with dread lest she be superseded by some fresher interest.

But what I write for is not to say these things, but to tell you, that, unless you come before six o'clock to-day, it may be better for you to postpone it until to-morrow. My cousins, the Andersons of Boston, are in town; and I must ask them to dine, and pass the evening. If you should come, we could hardly speak to each other; and, as they are more than a little dull, I am afraid you would be bored. But to-morrow I shall see you, shall I not? To-morrow I shall keep myself quite free.

Yours ever,

KATHARINE.

This note came to Truax in the rush and turmoil of business. He glanced at it, then thrust it out of sight, and forgot it for several hours. In the afternoon he found it accidentally, while searching for some papers to give Jasper. He re-read it with deliberation, and scrawled an answer at once.

— WALL STREET, NOV. 9, 187—

DEAREST KATHARINE, — So I forgot the rose. I assure I forgot nothing else. I dislike the Andersons of Boston heartily for taking up your time to-night. I am not sure what I shall do with myself. I wish I might tell you I had spent every moment in thinking of you. On the contrary, my mind has been occupied all day with very different things, — with a client in a will-case, who is more plague to me than all the opposing counsel in a lump, who systematically undoes all I have spent my strength in doing, who, when I want to send him like a rocket into the ranks of his adversaries, bursts irrepressibly, and batters my own face instead. Your own case progresses in a way: after about ninety-nine more special decisions on particular points, the real action may, I trust, have a chance to begin. But why mention such matters to you, when my duty is to save you pain, and when I am ever and ever

Yours faithfully,

JOHN TRUAX

It always fell to Alan Ford's lot to fill the gap which yawned for some amiable person : accordingly, since Katharine felt that Truax must not be bored by her cousins, she sent for the doctor to dine, and spend the evening. Mrs. Charles Anderson was a little woman, completely wrapped up in her own ideas, to whom every thing else was an incomprehensible riddle which she at once gave up. "Is it possible? I am amazed!" was her set exclamation in reply to everybody's observations, as if they lived in a foreign world of thought she had never entered. Her husband was a professor, and possessed a large blank mind of a metaphysical cast. It became Dr. Ford's privilege to keep Mrs. Anderson indifferently interested, and, by intelligent assent at the right moment, to endeavor to stem the tide of the professor's philosophical reflections. Mrs. Warrington had never been in the habit of talking unless she chose, and all through dinner found it suit her caprice to remain dreamily silent. The evening began to loom up like an impassible wall before Alan ; and he made a suggestion at dessert that the party should proceed to Wallack's, which was accepted with the most expressive cheerfulness.

It would have shown superhuman goodness in Alan Ford, if he had not at this epoch experienced some mild exasperation towards Katharine. She continually showed him that she was in a happy dream, out of which she took no pains to arouse herself. "Leave me to my delicious ecstasy," her face and manner seemed to say, when he would have interrupted her incessant reveries. It was clearly out of the question

that he should sympathize with what he considered her infatuation. For the first time he was impatient of the *rôle* she imposed upon him. He had taken pains in past times to prove to her that he was capable of self-abnegation, but even the pursuit of virtue has its proper limitations. He could hardly be expected to go on as he had for years gone on, — a slave to the whims, inclinations, and caprices of the woman he had once hoped to marry, but now found beyond his reach.

“Has she any heart?” he asked himself with a curious sort of indignation, while he was wearying himself in the thankless task of entertaining her guests. His question was both foolish and illogical, since no one who had seen Katharine for the past few days could doubt that she had a heart: it was only that her scheme of love did not include Alan.

While they were on their way to the theatre, the doctor ventured on a quotation from Horace concerning the danger of indulging in too large and vivid belief in the worth of any present happiness, and the propriety, while scudding before fair gales, of taking in a reef or two as a precaution against possible disaster. Professor Anderson, however, at once blunted the point of the application by preaching a little sermon; and Katharine remained blind to the warning.

It was late when they entered the theatre, and the curtain had gone up. Their seats, having been tardily secured, proved to be the front stalls, close to the orchestra, and directly under the boxes. It was the first night of a play which had been announced for

weeks with predictions of success, and the house was crammed. The favorite actors were warmly greeted, and every hit was judiciously applauded. Our party first gave their attention to the stage, then studied the bills of the play, with mutual side-explanations to each other, until they seized the meaning of the first act. No sooner was it over than Alan made the startling discovery, that in the left-hand proscenium-box just above them were John Truax, Mrs. Lyon, and Doris Gordon. The young girl sat in the extreme front of the box, directly facing the stage. Mrs. Lyon had turned towards the house, and was nodding to people whom she recognized through her lorgnette. Truax leaned over between the two chairs, and listened to Doris, who talked incessantly.

It was to Alan a dilemma ; but, before the situation resolved itself, the music stopped, and the curtain went up for the second time. It was evident that Katharine was not too deeply engrossed with her own emotions to find interest in the play. The plot turned on a love-problem. In any crisis of fresh emotion a man or woman is anxious to test his or her experience by that of others, and Katharine resigned herself to the vivid impressions aroused by the play. It was evident to Alan, who watched her, that the subtle suggestions of the story were giving the happiest and most comfortable cast to her thoughts. He was of so kindly a nature, that he almost trembled to have her discover that Truax was sitting within ten feet of her. When, however, the third act began without her giving a glance at the boxes, Alan breathed more freely. His

anomalous consciousness of responsibility subsided. He certainly was not in fault ; and Truax's aptitude at taking care of himself amounted almost to genius. The play by this time had developed absorbing interest ; and, when the curtain went down for the fourth time, Katharine glanced instinctively at Alan for sympathy in her pleasant agitation. She was flushed and tremulous.

At this moment Mrs. Anderson drew the attention of her cousin. The acting had left her cold, and she had been seeking distraction by peering into the boxes.

"Kate," said she, "do you know this very pretty girl here at our left in the proscenium?"

Katharine turned : while she looked, the color gradually receded from her face, leaving her pale.

"I saw Truax there some time ago," Alan struck in promptly ; then, at once addressing Mrs. Anderson, took pains to save Katharine the necessity of answering the inquiry.

"The girl is remarkably pretty," drawled Mrs. Anderson. "The niece of Mrs. Lyon, did you say? I never heard that she had any brother or sister. Oh, her husband's niece!—Miss Gordon? Not one of those troublesome Gordons surely! The gentleman seems wrapped up in her. He looked at her face, instead of the stage. Quite infatuated, I should say. Who is he? Mr. Truax! Not Katharine's lawyer? I am amazed. I never heard of such a thing! Kate, I wouldn't have a lawyer who was in love with my enemy. The thing is incredible, monstrous! He is making the most bare-faced demonstrations."

Allowing for some exaggeration, Mrs. Anderson's description was accurate enough. Truax's look and manner suggested a wooer. His back was turned to the house ; and he sat in a relaxed attitude, talking to the young girl at his side. Mrs. Lyon had retired into the rear of the box, and was chatting with two or three friends who had come in. Katharine could see Miss Gordon with perfect distinctness ; could even catch the tones of her voice, and make out some of her words. She wore a dress of black velvet, and on her head was a plumed hat of azure-blue. The dead gold of the hair waved back from the low, broad forehead ; the delicate pencilled beauty of the dark eyebrows and the speaking, mischievous, dark eyes, — all combined to make a picture not likely to be forgotten by the woman who looked on. It was not difficult to fancy the sparkling audacities which would issue from those laughing lips.

"How do you think the play will end, Kate?" asked Alan, trying to claim her attention ; for she had forgotten to withdraw her eyes from the box.

"Oh ! the play? I do not know, I cannot predict," Katharine returned with an air of weariness.

"A man can't be in love with two women at once," observed Professor Anderson. "The situation is absurd."

"Quite so," said his wife. "I never heard of such a thing."

"He is not in love with two women," suggested Alan. "Two women are in love with him. Still the result is much the same. A man with so much devo-

tion wasted upon him ought to be swayed a little one way or the other."

The fifth act began, a little forced, and overburdened with *dénoûments*, as all fifth acts are. It seemed to be ending happily. Katharine, too deeply stirred by what she had seen to have any thought except for her latest impression, hardly glanced towards the stage. Alan watched with interest to discover what the rewards of the hero were to be, and, since they did not fit the measure of his expectations, pronounced the whole thing a senseless piece of folly. The curtain went down, and everybody rose. Alan was curious to see which way Katharine would lead, and she surprised him by taking the side-aisle. It now became probable that she and Truax would be face to face when the latter emerged from the box; and, if this was her object, it was easily attained. He came out, with Mrs. Lyon on his arm, and perceived Katharine at once. Mrs. Lyon began to exchange civilities; while the lawyer stood speechless, his hat crushed between his hands, regarding Mrs. Warrington with a curious expression, half-comical, half-anxious. When she finally glanced at him, they bowed formally; but his eyes flashed with amusement.

Professor Anderson was an old acquaintance of Mrs. Lyon's, and she claimed his escort to the carriage. Accordingly, little as either expected it, Truax had the chance of offering Katharine his arm. Mr. Lyon, with his niece, fell behind.

"Why didn't you tell me you were coming here?" Truax demanded.

"We did not think of coming until we had almost finished dinner."

"I dined with the Lyons. Having nothing better to do" (here Truax pressed the arm he held), "I came here with them."

It did not at the moment seem easy or graceful to confide to Katharine the circumstance of his having secured the theatre-box on his way to his cousin's before dinner.

She said nothing, only turned her head, and looked at him silently from her violet eyes.

There was a pause ; then Truax asked, —

"Did you see me?"

"Clearly. We sat directly on your right."

"I did not observe you at all," returned Truax. "Stupid of me."

She did not immediately respond ; and he went on to say, —

"I dare say you noticed Miss Gordon."

"Oh, yes ! She is a most beautiful girl. Dr. Ford told us who she was. You apparently found her charming."

Katharine laughed a little, and smiled in his face.

"Charming is the word. I want you to meet her. She is the freshest, most spontaneous creature. Nothing ever amused me more than listening to her first impressions, which she gives with an audacity, a *naïveté*, which throws a new light on the sum of my experience."

There was no time for another word. Katharine was already addressed by Alan, who had heard their

carriage called. So Truax resigned her, and returned to his own party. While they were waiting a moment for the coachman to drive closer, this conversation became distinctly audible above the hubbub. The question was asked in a fresh, imperious voice, —

“Who was that beautiful woman, Mr. Truax?”

“Which beautiful woman?”

“I spoke to you about her between the acts, but you would not look.”

“Ah, then! how could I have seen her?”

“But you walked to the door with her.”

“Oh! that was Mrs. Warrington.”

“*Mrs. Warrington?*”

“Yes, Mrs. Warrington.”

“*Mrs. Warrington?* So it is she who is *my enemy*.”

CINDERELLA.

FOR a moment after encountering Katharine on his way out, Truax had felt foolish. Without any keen impression of omitted duties towards her, he yet experienced a vague consciousness of wrongdoing. He put Mrs. Lyon and Doris in the carriage, took his seat opposite them, and all the way to the house more or less occupied his mind with the reflection that he was an engaged man, and that it behooved him to be guarded. Katharine's gracious tact had not been thrown away. It gave him evidence of her absolute faith in his loyalty, and he told himself he must endeavor to deserve it.

"We are going to have a little supper as soon as we get home," Mrs. Lyon remarked to him, as the carriage rattled over the stones; "some birds, some croquettes, and a glass of sauterne."

"It sounds attractive," said Truax; "but I don't approve of this sort of thing, it does not suit me at all. My scheme of life, Miss Gordon, is to scorn delights, and live laborious days. Now, what I ought to do is to go to my room, and read hard for three hours before I sleep."

Having thus conscientiously defined his true course, he could afford to relax a little, and yield to his inclinations. He followed his cousin into the house,

assisted in arousing Mr. Lyon, who had fallen fast asleep on the sofa, then sat down to the little feast already spread in the back parlor.

Doris at once began to tell her uncle about the play. "You ought to have gone with us, uncle James," she said. "Nothing was ever half so delightful."

"Oh, yes! many things have been a thousand times more delightful," cynically returned Mr. Lyon, sleepily carving a bird. "Don't go too often to the play if you wish to keep up that state of mind. I dare say, now, it is your notion of heaven to go to the theatre, and sit in a box staring at the stage."

"I can remember when my idea of heaven was going to a party in a fresh ball-dress," said Mrs. Lyon.

"Oh, oh, oh!" cried Doris.

"I can remember when my idea of heaven was sitting beside a certain young lady, with free permission to hold her hand in mine," remarked Mr. Lyon pensively.

"That you never had until you were married," his wife returned with spirit.

"Oh, my dear child, I was not referring to you! What I was about to observe is, that one's conception of an earthly heaven develops with years. Nowa days" —

"Well, nowadays, — what is it?"

"Lyon will not tell," struck in Truax. "He is shrewd. Men of our age keep our dreams to ourselves."

"I don't want you to keep your dreams to yourself,"

said Mrs. Lyon. "I don't care about James's; but yours, John, have the charm and mystery of the unknown."

"I'll go on leaving them to your imagination then."

"You confess that you have your dreams."

"For the sake of giving your imagination rein, I'll confide to you that I, first or last, have had my little excursion into fairy-land."

Mrs. Lyon regarded him with a fine discriminating gaze. There could be no doubt but what Truax was under the dominion of some force he never used to feel. She had not been slow to make up her mind, the preceding evening, that he was in love with Doris. The logic of events all pointed to that conclusion. He had been genially interested in her at first, had been a friendly well-wisher about her marriage to some sufficiently suitable connection; then, after spending three-quarters of an hour in her society, had flashed out fire and wrath at the mention of the very scheme he had originally assented to. All facts and symptoms proclaimed that some new and powerful feeling had arisen in his heart, giving form and substance to what had hitherto been intangible, fire to what had been cold. Mrs. Lyon had hardly, in all her life, been so well pleased with any situation in which she found herself. All that Truax needed to make him the most delightful of men was to be under the sway of romantic impulses. Love would give a more ardent zest to life, excite a bold and large curiosity for every whim and mood of woman, an interest in the social existence which he had hitherto rejected

as full of restraints. It was one of the enigmatical fantastic freaks of destiny that he should have fallen in love with Doris, Mrs. Lyon reflected, staring at the young girl with fresh wonder at her making so easy a conquest. But at that moment Doris was looking at Truax, her great eyes alight, her cheeks aflame while she talked, wielding a black fan bordered with plumes, which her aunt had lent her.

"She is pretty enough to do any thing," Mrs. Lyon decided, with devout faith in the fascinations of her own sex. It was the duty of all men, even of a clever fellow like Truax, to become infatuated. This growing intoxication on his part was to be discreetly furthered. Mrs. Lyon's own daughters were in the nursery; but, as if by instinct, she knew all the arts of the *chaperones* who surround, guard, and give value to the charms of their charges. She must, above all, resist any opportunity of enlightening Truax as to the meaning of his state of mind; she must allow his consciousness to color with the thought of Doris, as naturally as the morning sky with auroral rays; not until the perfected day burst forth was he to realize what sort of transformation he had been undergoing. She recognized in her cousin a lively relish for present enjoyment of any sort,—but even while he yielded, a dislike of any pressure ever of the most agreeable circumstances,—above all, a supreme disinclination to confess himself beaten. Unless she had the wit to continue his complete subjugation, she could fancy an elastic rebound, an elated return to self-mastery. Accordingly Mrs. Lyon resolved to be very

discreet indeed. She had no fear about Doris. Doris must be considerably older and wiser before she took life seriously, and defined her need of marriage to herself: she was certain to be charmingly unconscious, and bent only upon enjoyment.

The little supper was delightful. Nothing happened to spoil it. After it was over, Mr. Lyon went to bed without concealing his design. His wife, however, declared that there was no chance of rest for her until she had put her cards for her coming "tea" in the envelopes, and directed them to her five hundred friends. It was merely an act of good-nature to stay and keep her company; so Truax and Doris sat down by the fire to talk.

"You are sure we don't interrupt you, aunt Bessy?" Doris asked her once or twice.

Mrs. Lyon was never in her life farther from being interrupted, she declared: she enjoyed hearing their voices.

Truax was less inclined to talk than to listen, which was a new mood for him. But Doris amused him; and, while she kept his mind agreeably diverted, he liked to look at her. Had she not been very graceful, her ardent, spontaneous ways might have laid her open to criticism.

"My own name is going out on the cards," she said to him. "The reception is to be given to me. Shall you come?"

"I never did go to an afternoon reception."

"I fancy you will come to this," she said, with a little nod. "But I shall not ask you to promise. I

dare say it will not be so pleasant as a dinner, for instance; and there can be little opportunity to talk. Mrs. Warrington is to be asked," she continued inappositely. "I had looked forward to seeing her: I felt curious to see her. I have seen her already."

"You had a glimpse of her certainly."

"Oh, I saw her plainly between the acts! She was looking at me. Your head was turned away, and you did not once glance at the audience; but her eyes fastened on me, and did not move for a long time. I can understand that she had heard who I was, and knew that we were enemies."

"Oh, not personal enemies!" said Truax. "A question of law is a mere question of law. It is not worth while to put any private feeling into it. I dare say, that, if Mrs. Warrington recognized you as one of 'the Gordons,' she was thinking to herself that she would like to have you, at least, enjoy some of her good-fortune."

"I do not want her pity," cried Doris.

Truax looked at the young girl with surprise. A vivid emotion dyed her face.

"Oh, nobody would pity you!" he said lightly. "You look like a girl to be envied. Certainly the ball is at your feet. What you have not got you will have."

"That sounds pleasant," returned Doris, laughing a little. "Sometimes I feel nowadays as if I had got every thing. Before I came, I used to spend half my time fancying what my visit was to be."

"What were your fancies like?"

She shook her head.

"Tell me, Doris."

"I used to think about Mrs. Warrington. You see," she went on, her manner gathering eagerness, "it is as if I were a princess who had lost a kingdom, and that lady had come to possess it, knowing it was mine all the time. I heard that she was young and very handsome; and I used to dream of meeting her, and of" — Her voice died away, and she grew scarlet.

"Oh, I see!" said Truax. "But then, after all, you never saw your kingdom."

"I had heard about it. From the time I was a very little girl, I have heard grandpa moaning and grieving over it. 'If you had what belonged to you, my little Doris,' he would always say, sighing and shaking his head over me. Not that I minded: I have had a very good time," she added 'philosophically. "Not even Mrs. Warrington can deprive me of that."

"Don't make a fetich of that lady," said Truax, more than a trifle amused. "You will come into your kingdom some day, little princess."

"Oh! it has begun," she exclaimed, laughing.

"What has begun?"

"My reign over my kingdom."

"You have your crown and sceptre, I admit that."

"I have my subjects too."

"Yes, I am one," said Truax, glancing at her lazily

"Oh, no!"

"You don't count me yet?"

"No, not yet."

"You have hopes of me?"

"I don't waste my time on illusions," said Doris, waving her great fan, growing every moment more bright, her pretty eyes more gleaming, and her smile more arch and gay. "I have enough real things to content me."

"Real things," repeated Truax a little piqued. "By real things you allude to actual lovers."

"Don't talk of lovers to Doris: she is to have no lovers for a long while yet," struck in Mrs. Lyon from her desk at the other end of the room.

"I allude to my subjects," said Doris. "Real subjects, who will do all I want them to do. I am like the centurion, and say 'come,' and he cometh, 'go,' and he goeth."

"You are talking about Mr. Decker: I begin to understand," said Truax. "Where is he to-night?"

"I said to him, 'go,'" retorted Doris.

"I am enormously obliged to you. Although he and I are both your satellites, and revolve in the same orbit, it is as well to keep us a good distance apart."

Doris was gazing at him brilliantly, but nevertheless did not seem to be listening.

"Her harp has many strings, and plays more than one tune," said Mrs. Lyon.

Doris had sprung up. She went into the next room, and returned with two baskets of flowers, which she laid down on the table, then went back, and brought out two more. This movement was repeated until nine superb bouquets of exotics were grouped under the chandelier.

Truax had also arisen, and stood watching her solemnly.

"Nine?" said he, laughing at her as she stood erect with triumph, her eyes laughing and wide. "Nine?"

"Nine," she returned, "nine."

"Ah!" said he, "I see: you are in the whirl of success, and have grown dizzy from it."

"You see how pleasant it is."

She looked and seemed immeasurably happy. Her charming cherub face showed a child's exultation.

"All this is delightful. It is to live at last; to have one's wishes come to pass,—wishes that seemed far beyond one's reach."

Truax felt discontented. It vexed him that she should find so much in this every-day form of flattery and devotion.

"I have sent you no bouquets," he observed dryly.

"No."

"Shall I order one for to-morrow?"

"Oh, do! I should feel very proud to have one come in with your card."

He laughed aloud. "Little vanity!" said he, and went back to his chair, and sat down. She remained standing before the fire, her pretty, slim figure and fair skin set off by the black velvet gown she wore.

"I see," he went on, "you are insatiable. It is not I nor Decker nor any of the boy-cousins you care about, but your own brilliancy and success. When you begin to go to parties, you will carry strings of flowers to proclaim the number of your victims. I have heard of girls whose trophies far outnumbered yours,—who had twenty-three or four."

"Twenty-three or four bouquets at once?" asked Doris, a little disconcerted.

"Yes, twenty-three or twenty-four."

She remained silent a moment, slightly pensive; then threw back her head, and laughed.

"I shall have twenty-three or twenty four, I shall have twenty-five!" she exclaimed with decision.

"À la bonne heure. I shall send you none."

"Ah, do! Dear Mr. Truax, send me one!"

"Not one."

"Yet you pretend to be my friend."

"Not in that sort of way, to be connected with a set of foolish jackanapes."

"You shall not be confounded with them."

"It makes no particular difference how one dances, provided one dances to the same pipe."

"It makes a great deal of difference."

It was hard for Truax to guess whence came the look of sadness and shyness on her face, unless she were lamenting his want of knight-errantry. There was a prolonged silence, but he looked at her all the time.

"Are you noticing my dress?" she asked at last.

"Yes: I was thinking you were quite splendid."

She turned herself round and round before him.

"Aunt Bessy says it is pretty, almost handsome," she exclaimed. "You should have seen aunt Dora and me contriving it. One breadth is pieced seventeen times," she added, conscientiously pointing it out to his unappreciative eyes; "but no one would ever know it."

"No, nobody would ever know it."

"Aunt Bessy wonders at me, I see she does, for knowing how to dress," pursued Doris; "but some things come by instinct."

"I can have no doubt of that."

"I like pretty dresses. I like rich, soft, silky materials. I like it all. Still, for all that" — She looked at him with a smile on her lips, in her eyes, on her whole face. "Often and often," she said, dropping her voice, and bending closer to him, that he might more distinctly hear her whisper, "it occurs to me suddenly, giving me a sort of fright, that we have nothing for dinner, and that old Simon and I must go out and catch some fish."

"That is right. Don't forget the old life and the old duties."

"No danger. I know very well, that, after all, I am only out for a little holiday, like Cinderella, and that presently the clock will strike, and all this brilliance and magnificence come to an end."

"That was not the end of Cinderella's story, was it?"

"No, the prince came next day," said Mrs. Lyon, who had jumped up from her desk, and was turning out the gas. "Cousin John, it is past one o'clock! Go home this minute! I am ashamed of you."

Truax made his adieus. While he was putting on his overcoat in the hall below, he heard his name called. He looked up, and saw Doris's elegant little figure bending over the balusters.

"Well," said he.

"Don't do what I asked you to do," she whispered.

"And what was that?"

"I really am disinterested. Besides, I prefer" —

"Prefer what?"

"That you should be different from any one else."

He sprang up the stairs.

"That does not mean that I am to be less to you than those young fellows?"

She stretched out her hands. He grasped them.

"No, more, much more," she replied.

Two minutes later, when he emerged from the house, he stopped short on the pavement, and looked up at the stars. The coolness was grateful to him. His head was certainly swimming.

CROSS-EXAMINATIONS.

THE next morning, at eleven o'clock, Mr. Mars-ton called on Mrs. Warrington, and was ushered into the library. She was expecting him, as he had made an appointment by note, saying that he was anxious to discuss a matter relating to her individual happiness. Katharine had long been in the habit of relying implicitly upon the old lawyer's slow and careful judgment. She had never fancied that he was in love with her; and his exaggerated estimate of his duties she believed to be the result of his fidelity to her dead husband, little suspecting that he had now, for the few past days, experienced a personal disappointment full of bitterness, mixed with not a little wrath. When he made his appearance Katharine thought she had never seen him look so tall, so thin, so chilly. He constantly frowned, and screwed and unscrewed his purplish lips.

"I beg you will not stir, madam," he said, with his precise, fastidious air, as she rose from her desk. "This is purely a business interview."

She came towards him, nevertheless, offering her hand. He observed with fresh chagrin that she had modified her dress. From the time of her husband's death she had worn only black and white: to-day there could be no question but what the bows on her

gown were red, — a brilliant, cardinal red. Except for this circumstance, her engaging manner might have softened Mr. Marston. By some mental association, he had always confounded her devotion to Mr. Warrington's memory with an anticipatory wifely affection for himself; and now these red ribbons not only significantly hinted, they ostentatiously vaunted, her renounced allegiance. Accordingly, he barely consented to touch the warm, soft fingers she extended, and at once retreated to the fire, and took up his stand before it, his hands crossed behind him.

"Madam," he began at once, "I called to ask you a question about a matter which has excited my curiosity."

"Pray ask it," returned Katharine superbly.

"Let me first inquire if it is true," he pursued with unusual fluency, determined to make easy headway over a trying topic. "Is it true?" — He broke down, frowned, coughed, cleared his throat, walked to the window, and looked out.

"Is it true," he recommenced in a feebler voice, "that you — are — engaged — to — marry — John Truax?"

Katharine blushed slightly, dropping her eyes. Mr. Marston believed that she was moved by his implied reproach. Her embarrassment was, on the contrary, an indescribably joyous one: ever since the preceding evening she had felt as if her late empire had been an Abou-Hassan dream from which she had awakened. This prosaic question dissipated doubts. Although she had momentarily seen Truax alien and separated, she was nevertheless his promised wife.

"Yes," she returned, "it is true. I am engaged to marry Mr. Truax."

The old lawyer remained obstinately silent.

"Surely, Mr. Marston," she cried piqued, almost angry, "you yourself brought us together."

He shook his head. "Yes," said he with a peculiar emphasis, unsuggestive of the least joy over his good deeds in their behalf, "I myself brought you together."

"You ought to rejoice in my happiness."

"So you are happy?" he remarked dryly.

"Happy for the first time since I was a child;" and as she spoke, something in her face made it clear to him that to her perceptions life was but just beginning.

"I thought," said he in an odd voice, "that Mr. Warrington made you a kind husband."

"He was kind, and I was grateful. I loved him dearly, but such a length of years divided us. He was older than my own father."

Mr. Marston had been looking out of the window as if engaged in minute observation of the opposite walls. He now turned back; his face was twitching, and he had grown pale.

"Any pretensions on the part of the old to absorb the affections of the young are, of course, absurd," he said in his dry, sententious way. "The young should marry the young."

"I am not young," remarked Katharine serenely; "I am almost twenty-eight, and Mr. Truax is eight years older."

Mr. Marston gazed at her with a sort of rage. Possibly she had no idea of the torments she was inflicting, but she ought to have comprehended his disappointment. He was ready to hate her for her happiness, her egotistic insistence that she had a right to a better happiness than an old man could give her.

"Very well," he said, with an abrupt little nod, "very well. I wish you joy, Mrs. Warrington, I wish you joy."

"Thank you."

"Now," he pursued in a sharp voice, "this preliminary question settled, I will proceed to business. As I remarked when I came in, I called to enlighten myself concerning a matter which has strongly aroused my curiosity."

There was something portentous in his manner.

"If I can give you any information" —

"You can without doubt. John Truax is still, I presume, retained as your leading counsel?"

"Oh, certainly!"

"I thought so," said Mr. Marston, drawing a long breath, "I thought so."

"Why do you ask?"

"I wished to be assured of it from your own lips."

"But what reason had you for doubting it?"

"Every reason, madam, every reason."

"You could have no reason at all."

"Then, Mrs. Warrington," said Mr. Marston, his voice shrilling with excitement, "if my doubts are unreasonable, *why*, I venture to ask, *why*, is half New York talking about his preposterous, unheard of, dangerous intimacy with the plaintiff in this very suit?"

"The plaintiff! The plaintiff is Robert Lennox Gordon."

"Robert Lennox Gordon is an old man, madam, an old man; and we have settled the matter that old men are not worthy of a moment's consideration. I allude to his grand-daughter, a beautiful young girl in whose interest this action has been brought."

It was quite evident to him that the blow had struck home. Katharine had certainly grown pale.

"Yes," she returned, "Miss Gordon is, as you say, a very beautiful young girl."

He looked at her scrutinizingly.

"Ah! so you have seen Miss Gordon?"

"Yes, I have seen her."

"It may be the world is wholly turned upside down, and that you, as well as Truax, are intimate with her."

"No."

"You are at least aware what everybody is saying about Truax and this girl?"

Katharine's heart was beating fast: she could feel herself throbbing from head to foot. She was in doubt whether to listen. It was not that she cared for the gossip; but behind this rumor silently stalked a shape that she dreaded yet longed to encounter, and gain some actual knowledge of.

"People say every thing," she returned evasively.

"I have never been in the habit of listening to idle talk."

"Nor is it my intention to ask you to do so now. What people are saying of John Truax is, that he has fallen head over ears in love with this girl, and that your interests are not safe in his hands."

Mr. Marston bent a piercing look on her ; and, try as she would to answer with ease, she was too discomposed to utter a syllable.

"Of course," he pursued, finding that she remained utterly silent, — "of course, you are indifferent to all this. You are engaged to Truax ; and though to the outside world he seems to have broken all rules, and transgressed all decorums, your knowledge of his character is so perfect, so entire, that you hold the clew to any mystery in his behavior."

Katharine was no longer under the influence of her fears. The spell wrought by his earnestness was broken by his irony.

"Yes," she returned calmly, "I understand Mr. Truax very well."

"I congratulate you, then, with all my heart. Knowledge of John Truax I consider a difficult attainment," said Mr. Marston, and at once proceeded to take leave.

Truax himself was expected that evening ; and, if Katharine felt any suspense, she had not many hours to wait. He came at six o'clock, and at once sat down to dinner with the two ladies. He declared himself to be utterly worn out by the fatigues of the day, and seemed to be in an absent mood, eating and drinking almost in silence. An air of constraint hung over the little party. By the time the heaviest part of the meal was despatched, the guest began to experience an almost unpleasant constraint under the blue eyes of Mrs. Eliot, who watched his motions with the precise observation of a naturalist who has found some new

and unclassified species of insect. He glanced at Katharine, and smiled, then all at once began talking about some knotty points of law which engaged him at present, apparently to the exclusion of every other interest.

"I am a dry fellow, I am boring you," he exclaimed after a time, pulling himself up as it were.

"No," said Katharine, "I like to hear you talk."

He leaned back in his chair, put his head a little on one side, and looked at her.

"When you say such pretty things as that, I ought to try to amuse you."

"That is not so difficult."

"You are very good-natured. It suddenly occurs to me that I might talk about a more interesting subject than law."

"For instance."

"About yourself. I admire your dress."

"You like blue?"

"It is amazingly pretty."

"Katharine came down to breakfast this morning with red bows on her dress," put in Mrs. Eliot, nodding and smiling at Truax. "She has not worn colors before, since her husband's death."

He roused himself a little.

"Wear blue often, Katharine: I think it is my favorite color."

"Blue is for blondes. I am not a blonde."

"You can wear every color, Kate," said Mrs. Eliot, who seemed to-night, by some quickened sense, to gain an inkling of all the talk that went on. "Blondes

have no choice, except, of course, *les blondes aux yeux noirs*."

He stared at her startled.

"*Les blondes aux yeux noirs?*" he repeated. "Are dark-eyed blondes a recognized class of beauties?"

"You thought Miss Gordon unique," said Katharine with a quiet meaning laugh.

The freedom and ease of her allusion had the effect of unshackling Truax. He had found himself dreadfully limited in conversation. Every subject seemed to lead to some suggestion of the preceding evening; and until he was certain how Katharine regarded his little dereliction, if dereliction it was, he was a trifle at a loss. He was now inspired with confidence.

"Perhaps I have never been in the habit of observing women," he returned, "and, for that reason, never before saw the combination of dark eyes with yellow hair and a fair skin. It is very effective."

"Very."

"Bacon says somewhere, I remember, that beauty, in order to be perfect beauty, must have something in it to startle us."

"That I don't believe."

Truax mused a moment, looking, meanwhile, at Katharine's fine, clear, harmonious loveliness.

"I don't know that I believe it either," said he, perhaps indisposed for discussion of the subject.

"You must tell me about Miss Gordon," said Katharine, rising from the table. "Mrs. Lyon has sent me a card for her reception. I shall make a point of going. Don't hurry," she added, just touching

Truax's shoulder as she passed him. "Aunt and I will be in the library."

He got up, and walked with her to the door. "I sha'n't be long," said he. "I don't want any more wine, but will just drink my coffee, and smoke a cigarette."

He went back to his seat. All this was quite natural, homelike, even if it did seem a trifle dull. He leaned his head back against the cushions of his high ebony chair, and fell a thinking. Once he turned lazily, and looked up at David Warrington's picture.

"Poor old man!" he said to himself. "It is not worth your while to hate me for sitting in your place. It does not fit me too comfortably."

He was out of spirits; he had been out of spirits all day: not that he had been in a state of regret or repentance, but that he had experienced the re-action from his unaccountable excitement of the previous evening. He had not felt like going home, and had walked about the streets for an hour or two after leaving Mrs. Lyon's in a tumult of impressions, sensations, and unuttered thoughts. The stars had shown clearly and brilliantly, and something in their light had fascinated him. Scraps of half-forgotten poetry, vividly impressed on his mind in early youth, came to his lips. The effect of this sort of folly on a sane man is to make him excessively dull on the following evening; and now that Truax had an opportunity of yielding to the influence of silence and solitude, he fell fast asleep in his chair. He was aroused by a faint exclamation, and, starting up, saw Mrs. Eliot retreating.

"Oh, I beg your pardon!" said the old lady. "If I had believed you were actually asleep, I never, never should have thought of disturbing you. I merely wanted to make sure."

He was thoroughly wide awake now, and on his feet. He appeared so tall, and made such a low bow, that Mrs. Eliot returned her finest courtesy, and retired with awe, feeling certain, that, instead of being asleep, he had been engaged in profound reflection concerning the lawsuit. She went up stairs, and Truax at once turned his steps to the library. He paused at the door a moment, and saw that Katharine had thrown herself into an arm-chair, and sat leaning forward with her finger to her lip, looking into the fire. Her attitude was extremely pretty, and he hesitated before disturbing it. She seemed unconscious of his presence, and did not turn.

"I beg your pardon, Kate," said he, coming up to her. "Your aunt aroused me. I had fallen asleep."

She looked at him smiling.

"It is not very long, — only an hour since I left you."

"The fact is," he went on to say, drawing a chair opposite, "I am tired to death to-night. I was in court from ten o'clock until four, and talked steadily for almost five hours."

"Busy man!" she murmured, looking at him half-pensively and half-absently.

"What have you been doing to-day?"

"Oh, nothing! Mr. Marston was here before luncheon. Afterwards other people called; then I took a drive."

"That all sounds pleasant."

"In reality, nothing could be more dreary or monotonous."

While she spoke so indifferently, involuntarily there arose before his mind a vision of Doris, her face full of youthful gladness, joy sparkling in her eyes, and playing about her rosy lips.

"You have been too often to the masquerade," he remarked.

"You mean, I have exhausted the interest of life?" said Katharine swiftly. "On the contrary, I have never yet felt it." Then she went on more calmly. "You were going to tell me about Miss Gordon."

"Do you really care to hear about her?"

"Certainly. We are, in a degree, opposing each other. In fact," Katharine went on with a laugh, "I heard her call me her enemy."

"That was imprudent nonsense on her part. She has no knowledge of the world, and is by far too careless of what she says and does."

"On the contrary, she seemed to carry herself with peculiar *aplomb*. There was no air of a novice about her."

"That is the effect of her high spirits."

"Yes, she certainly seemed in exultant spirits."

Truax was inclined to ponder these words a little, being used to grasp the meaning of phrases, rather than accept phrases themselves. Dim and vague notions of Katharine's having felt pique the night before had assailed him all day, and he had prepared hypothetical arguments to answer hypothetical accusa-

tions. Sitting beside her now, he realized that the case had been so clear, no explanations were required. What was imperatively needed was to interest her in the young girl. Every thing concerning Doris and her position had moved his fancy from the first; and the irony of fate which made him her opponent in the lawsuit, and the instrument of her disappointment, was a reason the more to compel a kindly feeling. He now set himself to the task of making Katharine also a friend to the pretty, comparatively friendless girl. He for the first time reverted to his opening interview with her on the altar-steps at St. Pentecost's, and gave the complete story of his day at Gordon's Point, describing her surroundings at home, her hopes and ambitions, and silent, childish fancies.

No possible fault could be found with the telling of the story. The trouble was, that he grew too eloquent, he made his case too clear: his arguments in Doris's favor were too incontrovertible, his suggestions too far-reaching, his illustrations too vivid. It aroused a suspicion that he was urged by too powerful a wish to serve Doris. Such warmth froze the answer on Katharine's lips: she was unable to do more than reply coldly, —

"I shall be glad to meet Miss Gordon. I rarely go to afternoon receptions; but I will go to Mrs. Lyon's, and be introduced to this very charming young lady."

He gave her a keen glance. When a woman is cold at the moment a man wishes her to be fervent, narrow when he longs to find her in the widest orbit of sym-

pathy, conventional when he expects to see her generous, she loses a certain degree of power over him difficult to recover.

He started up abruptly, and walked to the window, then turned on his steps, and went back to Katharine with a smile. She was the woman, whom, only a few days before, he had asked to marry him. When a man is sufficiently infatuated thus to jeopardize his future, it would be a subject for despair if he could not endure a trifle of contradiction. It was time to get rid of any specific ideas of having his own way as he had hitherto enjoyed having it. This lovely creature must be served, not dominated. He had asked her to marry him, because he admired her blushes, the droop of her eyelids, and the curves of her lips; and there they were before him more beautiful than ever. What need had he of curious musings on other subjects?

He sat down beside her.

"Are you happy?" he demanded.

"Yes."

"You are usually happy, I suppose?"

"I never was happy before."

"That is saying a great deal."

"Not too much." She looked frankly in his eyes, and smiled. "Why, John," said she, flushed and excited, "my life is just the opposite of the cold, negative existence I used to lead before I saw you. I never used to be happy. When I saw other women happy, it used to go through my heart with a keen pang, that they had what fate had denied me. I used to fling

away the novels I was reading, when the story came to the happy ending. Why was I alone forbidden to be happy? Yet at the same time I always kept on expecting the experience which must finally come and lend a charm to every-day things. Now it has come. Those wearisome years are over. Every thing I ever dreamed of or longed for I possess."

Truax kissed her twice. He wanted to be passionately moved out of himself, but nothing could stir him to-night. He heard her expressions of fondness, without their arousing an echo in the silence of his heart. But his wits were well trained: he could talk seemingly to the purpose, even when he had nothing to say. In spite of her jealousy of the previous evening, Katharine was, as she said, perfectly happy: she regarded Truax with mildly brilliant eyes, and admired him more and more every moment. He answered her looks with lordly good-nature. He had gone back to his chair at the other side of the table, and with his arms crossed before him leaned towards her smiling. He told her stories, and made her laugh; picked flaws in her, pretending to scold; made droll jests out of trivial follies; devised games out of nothing, until she forgot herself utterly, and became absorbed in gazing at him. Suddenly he startled her.

"*Don't*," he exclaimed, raising his hand deprecatingly.

"What do you mean?"

"Don't look at me so, dear," he exclaimed with intense seriousness. "I am not worth it."

"My looks are nothing."

"Don't feel so kindly towards me," he cried sharply, as if stung by sudden remorse. "Of course I want you to regard me, to love me in a way. But I warn you not to see in me what is not there. I am not wholly a bad fellow, Kate: I don't mean that. If a woman had taken me in hand earlier, she might have developed some few graces in me. As I have turned out by myself, I am just an average man, full of faults, weaknesses, even wickednesses. I have the very devil of a temper for one thing: I like to have my own way. I — I — In short, there is nothing in me to boast of, so don't begin by spoiling me overmuch."

She laughed a low laugh, as if intensely amused.

"John," she remarked pleasantly, "I had to-day two pieces of good advice."

"Of course you are not going to follow them?"

"I don't know: I am meditating."

"I suppose Marston or some other envious meddler wants you to fling me over, eh, Kate? Some officious person has notified you of my follies, and warned you to be quit of me in time."

"Not just that."

"I am certain that it is something concerning me," affirmed Truax, roused into inquisitiveness.

"Perhaps so."

"I felt it: I was sure of it. Now confess what the advice was."

Katharine drooped her flushed face.

"Not to-night."

"Yes, tell me, Kate! Dear Kate!"

But she seemed easy mistress of all arts of evasion.

and delay. Truax was fretted because his curiosity was not indulged. He went over to her sofa for a second time. Her warm, soft, fragrant hand lay on the cushion: he took it, laid it out on his own palm, and uttered cunning flatteries concerning its beauty, the slenderness of the long fingers, their rosy tips, the fineness of the satin skin. It was laden with rings.

A thought suddenly occurred to him.

"Ought I not to buy you a ring, Kate?"

"I beg you will do nothing so foolish and commonplace."

"You do seem to be well provided with rings. Who gave them all to you!"

"I came by them in a variety of ways."

Truax stared at the be-ringed hand with some retrospective jealousy of the excellent old gentleman who had been beforehand in claiming it. He singled out the plain band on the third finger.

"That was your wedding-ring, Kate?"

"It certainly was."

"I suppose," he suggested with ingenious awkwardness, "you will hardly go on wearing it after marrying me."

"On my word, dear friend, I don't know what is the customary arrangement in such cases."

"I insist," cried Truax petulantly, "that, no matter what the regulations are, you shall dispense with it now."

He realized his *bêtise*, and made a grimace with the zest of a naughty little boy, carrying the hand to his lips.

"How badly you treat me!" he exclaimed.

"How so? By wearing rings?"

"No. You ought to tell me about those two pieces of advice. I want to know, I do really want to know, what they were about. Somebody thinks I am managing your case badly."

"No, indeed! Everybody tells me you are going to win it for me."

"Somebody believes I shall make you a bad husband."

"Not quite that." She leaned towards him, and looked up. ("Really," he said within himself, "she is a most exquisite creature. Why on earth am I not over head and ears in love with her?")

"I don't know how to tell you," she proceeded: "it sounds audacious."

"I should like a sample of your audacity, Kate: you know something of mine."

"Mr. Marston and Dr. Ford insist that"—

She faltered, and seemed unable to go on.

"That you shall break off your engagement to me?"

"No: they want it announced. Mr. Marston came first, and was quite cross about it. Then Alan dropped in before dinner, and in his quiet, sober way"—

"No matter what he said, Kate," put in Truax, certain that he knew every one of Alan's arguments by heart. "The question lies altogether between you and me. What do you say?"

"I suppose," Katharine returned with some archness, "that the matter must become public sooner or later."

Truax smiled, — an indescribable, broad, vague smile.

“Of course,” he said, “it is the object of my ardent anxiety that everybody in town should be made acquainted with the fact of our engagement to-morrow.”

She looked at him with curiosity.

“Are you candid? Do you really mean what you say?”

“Why not? I shall hate the talk in the clubs, and the allusions I must encounter in the court-rooms; but it may all be met bravely, and will last but a week. It is something for a man to dread, becoming the prey of legal punsters. But, whatever dreary views your friends may take of your chances, there can be no doubt but what my engagement is such a piece of notorious good luck as will render every man in town my enemy.”

The words were satisfactory; yet how was Katharine to feel certain that Truax did not find his engagement a dearly-bought pleasure, its announcement an irksome and fatiguing duty?

“How do people go to work to make these things public?” pursued Truax. “I have heard that engagements were printed in the society papers.”

“All you have to do is to tell the news to one or two of your particular friends, and I do the same by mine.”

“The business is all on your shoulders then. I have not a particular friend in the world, except yourself.”

“There is Mrs. Lyon.”

“Mrs. Lyon!” exclaimed Truax. “Oh!”

He changed color ever so little.

"Certainly," said he with admirable cheerfulness.

"I will tell my cousin, Mrs. Lyon."

"I hope she will be pleased."

"Mark my words, Kate," said Truax: "she will be enormously pleased."

He discovered at the same moment that he was staying very late. Mrs. Eliot came down stairs, and peeped in to see if he were still there.

"I beg your pardon," she apologized very humbly.

"I do beg your pardon; but it was after twelve, and I was not sure — Then, not hearing, I always have the most dismal fancies about the silent house: there might be burglars, you know."

"Certainly," said Truax, "there might be burglars. It is dangerous, no doubt, leaving Katharine down here alone. I will go, and you shall take care of her."

"I am sure," returned Mrs. Eliot beaming, "that you take excellent care of her. I have said to myself many times, that I did wish Mr. Warrington could have had the pleasure of knowing you."

THE GORDON FORTUNE.

SINCE the decline of old Mr. Gordon's fortunes, he had not been on very good terms with James Lyon. At one time it had seemed to him as if his grandchild's uncle might have offered him substantial aid ; but Mr. Lyon had declined to lend him money, easily predicting the ruin which shortly followed the old man's buoyant financial schemes. Mr. Gordon had ever since borne his connection a grudge : but now that he felt himself on the road to fresh prosperity he could afford to waive his displeasure ; and, on coming up to town for a day or two to consult Mr. Decker, it suited his convenience to go to Mr. Lyon's house to see Doris.

"Is it really you, Doris?" the old man asked, as his grandchild met him. "Is it really you?"

"Really I, grandpa."

She had led him up to her own little morning-room, bright with sunshine and flowers and *bric-à-brac*. He sat down in an easy-chair, looked about him, appraising the furniture and decorations, inwardly deciding that the Lyons grudged nothing to their niece.

"Really you, is it, Doris?" he said again. "You have grown taller, or is it your long petticoats?" He looked at her critically, taking the stuff of her gown between his thumb and finger, and identifying it as an

old piece of trumpery she had found in the camphor-chest at home. What he did not recognize was something about the girl herself. As he had said, she looked taller, was more womanly, held herself better, and spoke with a new effect of voice and manner. He felt proud of her. He had been used to hold her good looks cheap, regretting that she did not resemble the dark, haughty-faced Gordons; but he saw to-day that there was an element of joyous inspiration in her beauty which his own race had never possessed.

He questioned her concerning her uncle and aunt, their engagements, their amusements, the people to whom they had introduced her. He shook his head over the new names: the world had changed since he had left it, but in spite of that it might not be for the worse. The old order of things had passed for him; and, since this new generation remembered nothing about the days of his greatness, it was better they should know nothing of his decline and fall. He was glad to hear of the attentions Doris had received, and pored over the sheaves of cards on the table, and sniffed at the bouquets freshly cut for her that morning. It flattered him beyond measure that the last of the Gordons should be thus caressingly greeted as she entered the world. This brilliant young creature barely suggested the little girl who used to flit about the sombre house at home, and haunt the shore, her hat flapping in the wind. The child had learned some witch-like arts since she came to town, and absolutely dazzled him.

More than beauty, she possessed that undefined

elusive quality of charm which we detect in some famous portraits. She stirred the imagination, she offered ample horizons to the fancy. Looking at her, the old man saw more than his grandchild ; he seemed to see the part she was to play in the world : a thousand suggestions of what her beauty was to bring her, far removed from her own unshaped consciousness, appeared clear to him. We need hardly set down his thoughts : no ideas can be subtler, yet at the same time more universally intelligible, than those connected with a girl on the threshold of womanhood. He realized that she had a future ; and, uncompromising egotist that he was and had always been, he began to speculate on the influence she might throw into the scale of his fortunes.

"And so, Doris," he went on, half-pleased, half-fretful, "you have the ball at your feet. You have sat in the ashes all your life, but your chance has finally come. It does seem strange that a little girl like you can easily change the balance of things. You may win back all I have lost and more, without having to fight for your prize." He grew silent, and mused at her. "I suppose you have lovers of all sorts," he said presently with a sigh.

"I don't want lovers of all sorts," Doris returned.

"George Decker complained to me last night that he rarely had a chance to talk to you," pursued the old man.

"And why should I talk to him when there are so many others?" retorted Doris. "At home there was no one else. Here it is very different."

"And do you like him, Doris?"

"He is my old friend. I want to treat him kindly."

"You wouldn't marry him, child?"

She started, and flushed violently.

"No," she cried rapidly and mercilessly. "No, never, grandpa."

He scrutinized her.

"You might do worse," he suggested. "Don't be foolish and romantic."

"He is very absurd," Doris remarked with the scorn of hopeful, happy youth. "He is too young to think of such matters. He seems a mere boy."

She was excited, feeling face to face with the realities of life. Love had begun. A little red spot burned on each cheek: a smile played on her lips. Her grandfather kept his eyes fixed on her, noting every sign of agitation at this new thought of a lover.

"I fancy," said he gravely, "that George has taken it into his head to be jealous of some one."

The color had flashed to her whole face.

"He has no right to be jealous! No: he has no right," said she. Mr. Gordon remarked to himself shrewdly that there seemed to be no doubt who it was George had singled out for his resentment.

"Is there some particular person, Doris?" he asked.

She gave him a rapid glance, then looked away.

"No one — no one," she replied indignantly. "I am not sure that I understand what you mean."

"You see a good deal of that lawyer Truax, don't you?"

Again she looked at him, then swiftly averted her eyes.

"Why, yes, grandpa. Not so much of late, for he has been away."

"And is he coming back?"

"He returned to town yesterday," said Doris. "He is coming to dinner to-night."

"Who else is invited?"

"No one. He does not care for general society."

"Does he ever talk to you?"

"Oh, yes!"

"More than to other girls?"

"He never talks to other girls. He talks to me more than to any one, even aunt Bessy."

"You flatter yourself, Doris. You are a little piece of vanity."

"No, I am not, grandpa."

"What does he talk about?"

"Every thing. He likes best to hear me talk."

"Queer entertainment for a sharp lawyer! He must be laughing at you. He says to himself, 'Let me see just how simple this little country girl is.'"

Doris's eyes blazed. "He never said so, — he never thought so, — never for a moment. He likes to hear me talk."

"Why should a man like that care about a little girl like you? He has the *entrée* of the best houses in town, no doubt: any woman would be proud to marry him."

Doris put her hand on her grandfather's arm. Her face was full of fire: she was smiling.

"Grandpa," she said joyously, "you need not think that I am vain or foolish; but you may venture to

believe that Mr. Truax likes me,—*he likes me very much.*”

Mr. Gordon shrugged his shoulders.

“He is making a fool of you, my poor child.”

Doris burst out laughing. “O grandpa!” she cried. “That is because you don’t realize I am a grown woman. I don’t wonder at your doubts; for sometimes I really need to pinch myself to be certain it is really I, and nobody else. They all here think so much of me—make so much of me! Yet nobody has been half so kind, half so flattering, as Mr. Truax. Not that he flatters me in words: indeed, he laughs at me, scolds me, orders me to do this or that, never seems satisfied unless he can pick flaws in me. He went to Washington a fortnight ago, and twice has been back for a few hours; and each time, no matter how tired or how hurried he was, has dropped in here to see me. ‘Now, child, talk to me,’ he would say: ‘tell me every thing you have seen and done and thought since I have been away.’ And while he leaned back and listened, I knew, I could not help knowing, that he was perfectly delighted with every thing I said. He hated to go away and leave me. ‘Must I go?’ he would exclaim. No, he never wanted to get away.”

Mr. Gordon’s exultation compelled his doubts to vanish. He saw a youthful destiny arising which promised the fruition of all his hopes.

“I did hear,” he remarked,—“Mr. Decker told me that there were rumors, mere rumors of course,—that Truax was to marry Mrs. Warrington, the de-

fendant in the suit. I confess, it seemed to me probable."

Doris laughed. The idea entertained her. There was exquisite drollery in such a notion. She laughed again and again, with a vivid sense of the humorous dismay with which Truax himself was likely to repel the suggestion.

Yet, although she laughed, her grandfather's words had given her a suggestion not unlike a shock. They addressed themselves to her self-consciousness, and roused a sort of troubled wonder.

Hitherto she had accepted the brightness of the delightful fact that the lawyer liked her, without any curious musings concerning its bearings on her personal experience.

Simply and singly she could accept it; but with the intrusion of these questions and comments came a new admixture of feeling which was not agreeable. It was as if she had opened a door, and peeped into a room forbidden her to enter. She would have liked to shut it to, and forget her imprudent glimpse inside.

A NIX.

IT so happened, that, the day after Truax and Katharine had made up their minds to let the world into their secrets, the lawyer's presence was required in Washington. Accordingly the announcement of the engagement had been postponed. As Doris had told Mr. Gordon, he had twice returned to New York during this interval, but his stay had been short: neither time nor opportunity seemed fitting, and he had not breathed the news to his cousin. Early in December he came back for good; and Mrs. Warrington celebrated the occasion by inviting a dozen of their particular friends to dinner on a Thursday, when their relation in the present and future was to be confessed.

On the evening before, he entered Mrs. Lyon's parlor with an unformed idea of communicating the news to his cousin that night. There is nothing like propitiating a woman by a confidence, and this was clearly the time to do it. Luckily, too, she was alone: he glanced around the room to make sure of this.

"Are you looking for Doris?" inquired Mrs. Lyon. "She was here a moment ago. I sent her into the conservatory to find a rose for your buttonhole. Go and look for her there."

"Presently," said Truax, conscious of the sword

suspended above his head, and anxious to have it down, and the moment of agony over.

"I suppose you are glad to be back from Washington."

"I assure you I am. It was a tedious ordeal."

"I dare say the tediousness was brightened for you. I heard of lots of dinners, to say nothing of suppers."

"Dreary enough they were too."

"Oh, yes! 'tis all very well for men to pretend to be bored to death wherever they go. We women, who never in our whole lives enjoy the chance of a good, jolly time, — we, on the contrary, are forced to declare that all entertainments are delightful, that we really never did like any thing half so much. James will go to a club-dinner, promise to be home early, then come in at three o'clock. 'Did you enjoy it, dear?' I inquire. '*Enjoy it?* I rather think not. Never had such a beastly dinner in all my life, nor saw such a lot of stupid fellows.' Oh, you are all martyrs where pleasure is concerned, depend upon it!" concluded Mrs. Lyon.

Truax laughed. "My dear Bessy, my time in Washington was one steady grind. Don't class me with Lyon; who is a lily of the field by comparison. Speaking of enjoyment, I could hardly, under the circumstances, expect that outside New York, just at present. I flatter myself you are a little interested in my prospects of domestic happiness."

Mrs. Lyon gazed at him, beaming brightly. She was certain that she read the meaning of his constrained smile. She rushed up to him, and laid her hand on his arm.

"You've got something to tell me!" she exclaimed

"I have, Bessy."

"Dear John!" she ejaculated, flung up her arms, clasped his neck, then, standing on tiptoe, kissed him

"Thank you," said Truax grimly. "I seem to be certain of your good wishes, at all events."

"Of course you are. Have I not had it in my mind from the first? Don't you remember how bewitched you were that first night you met her? When I went to bed after everybody was gone, there lay James fast asleep in his first nap; but I was utterly remorseless. I woke him up, and cried" — Mrs. Lyon suddenly broke off, flushed, and added in a weak voice, "Why, Doris, is that you?"

Doris had come in, and stood looking at them, and smiling. She wore a dress of some white, clinging material: her hair was plaited in long braids, which hung over her shoulders, and were fastened by "golden arrow studded with turquoises.

Truax bowed to her without moving.

"Isn't that a pretty dress?" said Mrs. Lyon, breaking a trying pause. We saw 'Faust' the other night and it is a reminiscence of Marguérite."

"Is it a daisy you carry in your hand, Miss Gordon?" inquired Truax with excessive politeness.

"On the contrary, it is a rose for my uncle James," returned Doris with even greater ceremony; and, that gentleman coming in at the same moment, she put it into his buttonhole, then took his arm, and led the way out to dinner.

"Little coquette!" whispered Mrs. Lyon, following

with her cousin. "She picked that rosebud for you. James would rather have a sprig of parsley at any time."

Truax, from the moment his eye fell on Doris, had experienced a certain constraint. What had Bessy Lyon been hinting at? Did she suppose, did anybody suppose —

"I was just going to ask you about the 'tea,'" he said, when his hostess appealed to him not to be stupid and silent. "That was your initiation into general society, I believe, Miss Gordon. Had I been in town, I should have looked in to see you performing the mystic rites."

"What mystic rites?" demanded Doris. There was a stand of flowers and fruits between her and Truax, and he saw her bright face peering at him through the loops of smilax and bunches of grapes.

"I don't exactly know what the initiation is, never having been a female neophyte myself; but I am well aware that afternoon receptions are always alluded to in terms of terror and aversion."

"Yes: we who have been there all groan at them, but we don't stay away."

"Nobody staid away from ours," said Doris. "Everybody came. Aunt Bessy and I stood together, smiling, and bowing, and shaking hands, for two whole hours. I could not remember anybody's name afterwards."

"Were there any men?"

"A few; but they hardly counted, and seemed dreadfully in the way. The event of the day was my meeting Mrs. Warrington, — my enemy, you know."

"Oh ! she was here?" said Truax in an odd voice.

"Yes, she was here. She was the most beautiful woman in the rooms ; was she not, aunt Bessy?"

"It is a conceded fact," returned Mrs. Lyon, "that Mrs. Warrington is the handsomest woman in town. You admire her, John, I am sure. I remember the evening of my reception in October, when you sat by her the entire time."

"Admire her? With all my heart."

"But don't you really admire her?" asked Doris eagerly.

"I this moment declared, Miss Gordon, that I admired her with all my heart."

"But that sounds too extravagant to be sincere."

Truax laughed slightly.

"I am extravagantly sincere," said he. "Can't you imagine one of your admirers being at once sincere and extravagant?"

"Not in that way," Doris returned with a fine air of disdain. "As for Mrs. Warrington," she resumed, assured at heart that Truax cared nothing for that lady's beauty, "she certainly is very lovely. She seems to me like one of those women who are born to attract every thing. When I looked at her, remembering that it was she whom grandpa was trying to dispossess of her property, I thought it is all of no use for us to try. She was made to win, and never to lose. We cannot compete with her easy habit of success. And when she came up to me, and said, in her soft winning way, 'I have heard of you, Miss Gordon, and I wish we might be friends,' I half hated her in my

heart. Yes, had I uttered my real thought, I should have cried out, 'No, we can never be friends. We were born enemies.'"

"Nonsense, child," said Mr. Lyon. "You talked to her as amicably as possible. I saw you eating ices together."

"Oh, it was easy to talk!" cried Doris. "What it was impossible for me to do was to love her. She looked at me, listening to all I said with a sort of curiosity, — not a curiosity which disturbed her equanimity, which was always perfect, even crushing; but as if, for some reason, she was inquisitive about me, and wanted to understand me. And I laughed and jested, and felt that I must be at my best, while all the time she remained cool, unapproachable, magnificent. Occasionally she smiled, as if she knew that I was pretending, that I was not at my ease. She dispirited me. I felt that fate had given her every thing, and had denied me every thing. She utterly spoiled my day," added Doris, flushed and excited. "She made my life seem insignificant and hopeless. All I wanted in the world belonged to this beautiful, happy woman."

"I do suppose," struck in Mrs. Lyon, "that Katharine Warrington hasn't a speck of heart."

Truax experienced an irksome necessity for candid speech; but one of the two servants was offering him bread-sauce, while the other was filling his glass.

"No heart!" he repeated sceptically, his eyes glued to his plate.

"I always asserted, Doris," said Mr. Lyon, laugh

ing, "that your grandfather was bound to lose his case. Mrs. Warrington is sure to get the better of you, and particularly since she has Truax to help her in the nefarious business. Now, since we have him at our mercy, why don't you poison him, or tie him up with silken cords, or charm him into a long sleep? Here's your chance."

"I don't object, Miss Gordon," said Truax.

Doris flushed scarlet.

Mrs. Lyon burst out laughing.

"Like the nix detaining King Harold Harfager," said she.

"How was that?" asked Truax, wishing the conversation might turn.

"Doris shall sing it to you."

"Does Doris sing?"

"Like a bird. By the way, speaking of Mrs. Warrington, she has invited us all to a simple quiet dinner to-morrow night. I thought the invitation so oddly worded, — as if we belonged to the family. It is a party of twelve; but she wrote the note in the first person, and signed herself 'affectionately yours.'"

"That is an indication of heart, at all events," said Mr. Lyon. "I suspect she wants to show her kind feeling to little Doris. She was afraid, that, unless she made a special point of it, we might not let her accept."

"I suppose you are not invited, John," said Mrs. Lyon.

"Yes, I am invited to dine at Mrs. Warrington's to-morrow."

"And are you going?"

"I surely am going. You might as well ask if Hamlet was to play his part in the tragedy."

Mrs. Lyon stared a little, finding something in the words, yet not suspecting their meaning.

"Do you advise us to take Doris?" she asked.

"Is it a matter in which I could advise? I should say, take her, by all means." His voice had stiffened.

Mrs. Lyon laughed.

"Rather a piquant situation confronting two" —

"Oh! we are not rivals," broke in Doris. "The moment Mrs. Warrington sets up a claim, I resign at once."

"That was a very neat thing of yours, Truax," chuckled Mr. Lyon, "to call a dinner a tragedy. Now, I don't mind a club dinner, — a man may throw himself about a little, and utter what comes into his head; but a stiff, starched" —

"What a society man you have become this winter, John!" said Mrs. Lyon, frowning at her husband to express her aversion for men's dinners: "these invitations used to bore you. I used to be puzzled to know what your notion of diversion was, outside of a courtroom. When you were forced into ladies' society, you had all the grace and invitingness of a ramrod."

"Shall I go and eat my enemy's salt, Mr. Truax?" asked Doris.

Truax did not seem to hear, but turned on the instant, and began speaking to his host about the lawsuit which had detained him at Washington. He ~~are~~ discussed business matters, but just now general

conversation seemed too dangerous. He knew that he ought to have disclosed the secret of his engagement on the first mention of Katharine's name; in fact, that he ought to have avoided such random allusions by unbosoming himself to Mrs. Lyon before dinner. But no occasion had been propitious; and now that the subject had been so freely handled, he felt powerless to open his lips. He could not avoid certain uneasy susceptibilities regarding Doris. He did not, however, look at her again, but talked incessantly to his host until the end of the meal.

Mrs. Lyon, pre-occupied and distracted, listened to every thing without hearing, laying plans all the while for the future happiness of Truax and Doris, which she determined to promote without delay by allowing them to spend the evening in each other's society. As soon as she rose from the table, she went up stairs; and Doris was left to go into the parlor alone.

There had been something disenchanting, disillusionizing to the young girl in the conversation to-night. Truax seemed cold and alien: the present was doubtful, and the future hopeless. The picture of her old life rose in a vision, and took possession of her mind. She seemed to be sitting at home in the little library, with its dim lamp half-lighting up the dingy corners. Outside was the monotonous melancholy voice of the sea; while within sounded her grandfather's querulous complaints of life, — his hopeless iteration of loss. A sort of veil seemed drawn over every thing: her present self, a bright young creature sitting in luxurious rooms, ceased to exist.

Truax came in, and, after waiting a moment, went up to the window-seat, and touched her shoulder.

"Well, child," said he, "what are you staring at out of doors?"

She turned. Here was the actual.

"What were you thinking about?" he asked.

"I was thinking about my grandfather and my aunt."

"Home-sick?"

"No, not that. It must be dull for them with me away. Grandpa was in town for twenty-four hours, but went back this morning. Perhaps I ought to have gone with him."

"Oh, no, no!" said Truax with decision. "Where is my cousin?"

"A dressmaker brought some dresses: she went up stairs to try them on."

"So you are all alone?"

"All alone."

"Your uncle has gone to his club. I was on the point of setting out with him, but came in to say good-night."

"Good-night," said Doris with a wayward air.

"So you really want me to go?" he said, looking at her with curiosity.

"Is it a question of my wants?"

"Suppose I stay. Perhaps, — who knows, Doris? — in all our lives we shall never again have a chance of sitting down alone together."

She trembled a little. She heard a sort of passionate craving in his words, but did not attach much

meaning to the words themselves. She could not sustain herself under his glance to-night, nor address him in her old frank, unconscious manner.

"Is any thing the matter?" she asked.

"No, no," said he. "No: I am discontented with myself. I feel like calling myself names." He stopped short. "Come over here and sit down," he exclaimed. "It is cold by the window. You are pale." He led her across the room, and placed her on the divan before the fire. Whatever his mood was, there was something distinctly pleasant in this silence and solitude. He stood in front of the young girl, looking down.

"She is getting to be quite a woman," said he teasingly. "She has an air of style and magnificence. As soon as a girl begins to have a career with beaux, bouquets, lovers" —

"I have no lovers, Mr. Truax."

"Not one?"

Doris's eyes sank: her face was all aglow. She listened, fascinated, without wanting to listen. With all her longing for experience, her zest for knowledge, she had a still tenderer love for her bright life, as yet unspoiled.

"Not one?" he said again. "I am quite certain you feel sure of one, at all events. Whether you confess it to your own heart or not, some time you will know all about the matter. Then, if I come in and find you alone, you will not be sitting pale and sad, with tears in your eyes, but smiling, dimpling, blushing" —

Doris was smiling, dimpling, blushing now.

"It does not seem to me such astonishing good fortune to have a lover," said she. "I am happy enough without any."

"Without any? You know you have one."

His look fluttered her a little.

"I don't like to hear you speak of Mrs. Warrington as you spoke to-night," he pursued, as if one thought led into another, and made the connection in his own mind. "I can't bear to feel that you have any bitterness in your heart, or any reason for bitterness. Don't think of the lawsuit. Neither Mrs. Warrington nor you have any thing to do, except with the result. Of the two, she has most to apprehend. Whatever happens, you are not worse off, while the loss of a large part of her property would be felt by her severely. You do not need a fortune to insure you a happy future. But don't think about your future at all: be happy in your present."

As she tried to meet his glance, there was an irresistible shyness in her eyelids: they would not lift.

"You have enough in the present to make you happy, have you not?" he persisted. "More will come to you."

He was thinking of George Decker. Of course Doris must marry the young fellow. He felt as if the end of old things were at hand. He would be married, and Doris would be married; and no doubt, in a sort of way, it would all be pleasant enough. Her future would thus be assured; and a woman's future should be no doubtful matter. Still, for his own part, he was weighed down by an indescribable dreariness.

"I wish," he exclaimed abruptly, a sudden impulse clearing his dull mood, "that I might manage your future for you."

She sprang up. Truax was too near her. She felt afraid of him. "You wanted me to sing to you," she said.

"So I did ; but first I want something else."

Her heightened color, her haste to be free of him, her novel air of shyness, delighted and exasperated Truax. He suddenly wanted something more than this incomplete confidence. He followed her across the room to the piano.

"It is so pleasant," she remarked, seating herself, "to have this perfect instrument ! Ours at home is all jangling and unstrung. Even if it had not been worn out to begin with, the sea air would have spoiled it."

"Oh," said he in a tone of disgust, "don't talk about pianos !"

"Pianos are a good subject."

"I know one that is more interesting to me, that is yourself."

She flung him a perplexed, disturbed glance.

"I wish you would tell me something," said he. "My temper is not in a satisfactory condition to-night. I shall be savage unless I know. I see a difference in you. Tell me, Doris, is there anybody" —

"Don't ask me useless, foolish questions."

"This is not a foolish question. I am a better friend than you can guess. I want to serve you. I have a right to know : I claim the right to know if" —

There was an assurance in his manner that she did

not feel power to resist. She sat at the piano, looking straight before her with an air of intense, subdued excitement.

"Tell me, Doris," said he, putting his hand lightly on hers, "you care for some one? I can't altogether believe it is that young fellow."

She made an exclamation. He looked at her attentively: her face expressed anger, rebellion, almost fury.

"Of course I do not care for him," she cried.

But she would not look at Truax. He felt now as if he held in his hand a flower, at whose whitest petal, close to the very heart of the blossom, he must get, or die.

"Doris," said he, "tell me, then, who it is."

She looked up at him pleadingly.

"Is it right for you to ask me this?" she demanded.

"I see: you don't trust me."

"I do trust you," she cried vehemently. "But — but — are you sure it is right for me to tell you?"

Her look was as candid as a child's. Neither glance nor words offered a bribe to his ardor, but an imperious feeling shook him to his finger-tips. The loose, wavy braids of her yellow hair hung over her shoulders, and almost touched his breast as he bent over her. He pressed his lips to them twice, then put them down.

"No, child," said he in a constrained voice, "tell me nothing. I have no right to ask you any thing."

She gazed at him bewildered.

If he had expected even a momentary pleasure

from the caress, he was disappointed. He was instantly plunged into a re-action of disenchantment, almost of despair. He hated himself for having seemed to make love to the young girl, as it were in jest. He scorned himself as he thought of the position in which he had momentarily placed her. Then it suddenly occurred to him how much more real and noble his life might all at once have become, if her wordless confession and his burst of feeling had been something on which he was free to base an actual experience.

"Doris," said he, looking at her, "don't ever hate me for this. It would not be worth while for you to judge me too harshly."

"*I hate you, Mr. Truax?*" she repeated blankly.

"Some time you will understand, and you will say to yourself — Hush ! there is Bessy. You were going to sing me something."

"What shall I sing?"

"What was it?"

Mrs. Lyon had come in demurely with an air of having never been away, and now sat down at her work.

"Oh ! that old ballad about King Harold. Sing it, Doris."

Doris sang it, —

"It is King Harold Harfager lying the waves below :

Beside the beautiful water-fay, the years they come and go.

"Spell-bound, and banished by the nix, he cannot live nor die .

Since first his blissful bale began, two centuries are by.

"His head lies deep within the lap of that dear lady ; still,
He looks with longing in her eyes, and cannot gaze his fill.

"His golden hair is ashen gray; his cheek-bones, keen and high,
Look ghastly from his yellow face; his withered form's awry.

"And many a time from his long love-dream he starts up
suddenly;
And the castle of glass begins to shake below the stormy sea.

"And many a time he dreams the wind bears down his Norse-
men's call;
And he lifts his trembling arms in haste, and sadly lets them
fall.

"And at times, in the waters above him there, the sailors seem
to sing;
And of Harold Harfager's renown, their brave old ballads
ring.

"Then Harold groans, and weeps, and sobs from his great
heart; but she
Stoops quick, and, with her sweet red mouth, she kisses him
smilingly."

"Hasn't she a charming voice, John?" said Mrs.
Lyon the moment the song was over. "I am going
to make arrangements with Salviati to give her lessons.
I have put it off because he will order a stop to her
ballad-singing."

"Yes," said Truax dully.

"Did you ever hear that song before?"

"Never."

"Did you like it?"

"I liked it very much."

Mrs. Lyon glanced at him impatiently.

"What's the matter? Did King Harold's fate
affect you?"

"Powerfully."

"I see you wanted to be in his place."

"Not unless she could make him forget every thing, — his wife, his children at home, his reputation, and his private honor. She might have subjugated him more completely while she was about it." He crossed over to the fireplace, looked at the clock, then at his watch. "Half-past ten," said he. "I must go."

Still he did not go.

Mrs. Lyon looked with disquietude, first at him, then at Doris. The young girl, too, was spiritless and mute. "Perhaps," thought the self-sacrificing match-maker, "I came down at the wrong moment. They both seem in an odd mood."

"Don't go," she said aloud to her cousin. "Did Doris entertain you well while I was up stairs?"

"She did all she could. I am in a devil of a humor to-night, and cannot be amused." He went over to Mrs. Lyon, and began pulling her embroidery crewels about. "Bessy," said he in a very distinct voice, "I have something to tell you."

"Something interesting, I hope."

"Deeply interesting to me at least." A pause ensued. He looked over at Doris, and tried to smile; but his face was too stiff, — he had grown haggard.

"There comes James," said Mrs. Lyon a trifle dismayed. "May he hear too?"

"By all means." Accordingly, they all waited silently while Mr. Lyon's boots creaked up the staircase. Presently he entered beaming.

"I was in hopes you were still here, Truax," he cried

on the instant, with ominous cheerfulness. "I hurried home to tell you a bit of news I heard about you."

Truax straightened himself against the back of his chair to meet the blow. "All right," said he. "Let's hear it."

"Old Marston declares you are engaged to marry David Warrington's widow."

Truax looked impassive.

"It is a fact," said he. "I have had the honor to be engaged to Mrs. Warrington for some weeks."

Mr. Lyon's face, which had been broad with smiles of incredulity, changed gradually, its humorous expression oozing out, leaving the features distended with wonder. He looked foolish, and was conscious of his looks. There was an unbroken silence for a few minutes; then he said, with a forced laugh, —

"I'd better go back to the club and eat my words. I swore right up and down that the news was a ——— lie."

"I think it is charming," said Mrs. Lyon, with very bright eyes and red cheeks, and a manner which left her mistress of the occasion. "I congratulate you, John, with all my heart. Katharine Warrington is the most beautiful woman I know, — rather too unapproachable for most men, but she probably suits you. How long did you intend to keep us in the dark concerning your good fortune?"

"Mrs. Warrington invited you to dinner to-morrow, in order that all our particular friends might be enlightened at once."

"It would have been a delightful surprise. It seems a pity the thunder-clap was forestalled"

"Bessy," exclaimed Truax, stung and exasperated by her manner, "I ought to have told you at first. I had no intention of being uncandid in this matter. Then to-night I should certainly have spoken out when that lady was under discussion, but—the servants were there. I was just about to tell you when Lyon came in."

"I am sure I am extremely grateful for such a mark of confidence," said Mrs. Lyon impressively. "We are cousins, and I have lately seen you more intimately than it has been my privilege to see you for years; and it is pleasant to feel that you put faith in my friendship and in my judgment."

"It was very much to my own amazement that I suddenly found myself cast for the *rôle* of engaged man," Truax remarked quietly. "I had to get used to it."

"Before acting the part before others?"

"Exactly. I had never been in the habit of marrying. Still, the situation is not unique. Society expects all men to marry sooner or later."

"Not you, John, not you. I never detected the faintest hint of a domestic idea in your mind. However, 'tis a great match, and I congratulate you."

"So do I, Truax, so do I," joined Mr. Lyon with an effort at cordiality. "She is a handsome woman, and you have done well."

"Thanks," said Truax stiffly, rising. He had never in his life suffered any thing like the humiliation of the last half-hour. It occurred to him now that he had acquitted himself of his duty, and might as well

end the ordeal. He shook hands with his host and hostess, then crossed the room, and went up to Doris. He had not looked at her before, since he made his confession. She was pale, save for a spot of color on each cheek ; but he saw only her eyes. As he approached, she rose. It had been his intention to say something playful and friendly. She was no more than a child, and her comprehension of his half-hour's folly could be no more than a child's comprehension : but, under the tyranny of those eyes, he was powerless to utter a syllable ; what he saw in their glance not only controlled but tortured him. He simply bowed, **then,** **without a word, walked straight out of the room.**

A HOUSE OF CARDS.

IF Miss Gordon had, in the least degree, lost **her** heart to Mr. John Truax, she was now left in the position of a great many forlorn heroines whose woes have excited the compassion of poets and novelists. The real truth was, however, that Doris felt not a little fierce. She had suffered that evening, and did not relish the idea that she could be made to suffer. She determined at once to suffer no more. She would not again be tortured, excited, and humiliated : she would crush or defy her little miseries. She was more angry with herself than with Truax. In the silence of the night she blushed to think of having counted with security upon his preference ; instantly Mrs. Warrington's beauty and charm took possession of her imagination ; she enthroned her, almost worshipped her, as a goddess far beyond other women. She measured her own insignificant powers against those of her rival, who could by a glance make a conquest of all hearts, — speak, and force all hearts to follow. Lying awake on her pillow, for the first time in her life, Doris took an actual pleasure in reviewing her recollections of Katharine. It was a vivid picture which shone upon her, like a terrible but adorable vision, all the night through ; and by morning she was disposed to feel that **her** disheartening failure was the result of the very

nature of things. While some might command circumstances, others must content themselves with mere half-successes, and find their will broken against every obstacle.

Had this state of mind continued, Doris would have taken her revenge upon fortune by becoming a philosopher. The fact was, however, that, when she rose, began the operations of the day, and stood half-dressed, looking at herself in the glass, the lust of the eye and the pride of life returned. After seeing Mrs. Warrington's imaginary perfections all night, she might have expected to find herself dull, pale, insignificant, by contrast. The effect of her vigil, however, had been to flush her with a youthful fever, heighten the lustre of her dilated eyes, and render her beauty more interesting. While she looked at herself, it suddenly occurred to her that for a young lady of seventeen there might exist compensations, that it was possible to wrest something worth having even out of this irreparable loss.

Mrs. Lyon had also had her private reflections during the night, and the result was a suggestion to her niece that she should attend the opera instead of going to Mrs. Warrington's announcement dinner that evening. She had thought with pain and vexation of all she had done to throw this young girl in the way of the lawyer, who had amused himself without conscience and without remorse. She left him out of the question: it did not once occur to her that Truax had put any feeling into the matter. Her pity was all for Doris, who had received for truths certain dreams of

her imagination and suggestions of her heart, which must now count for nothing but fictions.

Doris, however, preferred to go to the dinner; and to the dinner she went. Had she remained away, Truax would have tormented himself with speculations as to the reason of her absence; but he would have felt himself more the master of the situation. He behaved becomingly, nevertheless, and threw an extravagant zeal into the execution of his duties.

"Mrs. Warrington was handsomely dressed," remarked Mrs. Lyon as the party of three drove homewards."

"She did not wear the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit," put in Mr. Lyon. "She looked proud."

"Well, she ought to look proud. I don't know anywhere such a man as John Truax."

"And do you think he looked proud?" asked Doris as if for information.

"I thought," returned her uncle, "that he looked tremendously bored, and I don't see how he could help it. If ever I marry again" —

"You won't, dear," interrupted Mrs. Lyon sweetly. "It is I who will marry again. The thing went off very well, that must be confessed. Everybody was in the best possible spirits."

"Except the bridegroom-elect," harped Mr. Lyon. "He felt his neck in the halter, and longed to be free of it."

But Mrs. Lyon would not agree with her husband. She was anxious to repair whatever mischief she had wrought, without loss of time. Since Truax was no

possible *parti* for her little Doris, she longed to have done even with the recollection of his once having seemed desirable for her.

"That is all nonsense," she remarked with an air of deciding the matter. "John is in love. I can always tell infallibly. I know the signs, and John is considerably infatuated. You could see that Katharine was absolutely satisfied with him, and she is not a woman to put up with any thing short of complete subjection. Oh, depend upon it, it is a regular love-match!"

It all seemed clear enough to Doris. The news had come upon her like a thunderbolt; but such swift illumination had followed, she was not left a moment in confusion. Her head had whirled, and she had trembled like a leaf on meeting Truax and Katharine that evening. He had looked at her a little sadly and questioningly, and she had smiled back; then the ordeal was over, so far as visible signs were concerned. After all, so long as nobody knew of her folly, what was it but a dream? She had liked Truax, liked him better than anybody she had ever met, — the tone of his voice and the glance of his eye and the touch of his hand. All her wit leaped up clear and sparkling in reply to his easy, good-natured, humorous suggestions. She could talk to him; she liked to tell him every thing: the sweetest thought was but a half-joy until he had shared it.

Now that was all over: she must take her good sense in her two hands, and make the most of it. The world was not a yawning void because Truax no longer

existed for her. Here was her uncle, her aunt, — all the pleasant circle about her. Here was a lover uttering more devotion in an hour than Truax had ever, save once, thought of displaying. Ah, that once ! If one vivid memory could have ceased to burn into her imagination, this sort of possible existence would have been a more manageable matter.

It was this crisis of feeling which facilitated the wooing of Mr. George Decker. The lawsuit was progressing in these days, in spite of perpetually recurring hinderances ; and the Deckers, father and son, were infusing their personal zeal into the Gordon cause to a degree which ought to have aroused the liveliest feelings of gratitude. Mr. George Decker used to come to the house in quiet hours to see Doris, and point out to her triumphantly the probable issue of the course her counsel were pursuing. His extravagant delight in his own shrewdness was tempered by the wish never to offend her fastidious taste. And it was not his way to belittle his opponents : he enjoyed doing Truax ample justice. It must be confessed that Doris took an almost unfair advantage of this apparent disinterestedness. She liked to make George talk about the incidents constantly arising in the case : she knew how to ply him with questions, not about Truax, but skilfully suggesting answers which included mention of him. She threw herself with the warmest display of interest into the story of every thing that was doing. And why should she not ? Did not the happy issue of the suit concern, not only her own future, but that of her dear aunt and grandfather ? And were not

Truax and Mrs. Warrington her enemies? — enemies, indeed, linked together to thwart and vex and despoil her?

“I don’t wonder Mr. Truax is deeply concerned in the case,” said George. “It is a good deal for a man to feel he is serving the interests of the woman nearest and dearest to him. He is engaged to marry Mrs. Warrington.”

“I have heard so,” returned Doris.

“Of course professional zeal is incentive enough,” pursued the young lawyer. “Still, there is a sort of zest about a private interest in the matter.”

“Happy Mr. Truax !” exclaimed Doris with a fierce little smile.

“Happy anybody who serves the woman he loves !” pursued the young fellow chivalrously. He did not in the least fill Doris’s idea of a knight-errant. He was well-bred and good-looking enough, and had nothing about him to shock or offend an ordinarily fastidious taste : he was kindly, good-humored, rather witty. She could hardly define to herself the fault she found with him. Analyzing her sensations now, as she regarded him after his burst of enthusiasm, she decided it was his moustache which displeased her : it was too long, too well waxed ; its perfection was intrusive, it bristled with self-consciousness. It removed him from the circle of her sympathies ; it denied him kinship with her ideals.

When it was not his moustache which offended, it was his gloves, his neck-tie, even his immaculate and highly polished boots. His daintiness, his nicety, was

a foible. But, in spite of all this, Mr. George Decker had concentrated his powers to further his interests, and began to muster alarming auxiliaries to help him in his suit. It was of course impossible for Doris to accept his labors contemptuously: she grew sympathetic; she had a grateful, almost tender feeling when she realized how he was working, and could not resist listening kindly, even when he exultantly applauded his own cleverness.

"You will be rich," he said one night to Doris, a few days before the trial was to come on. "Nothing ever pleased me so well; yet, all the same, at times I feel curiously dejected."

"And why should you be dejected?" demanded Doris.

"Now I can always find you, — always command a word from you: you depend on me, so to speak. It is as if I were a ladder which helps you to mount. By and by you will no longer care for me."

"Then I should be very ungrateful."

"And will you not be ungrateful?"

"I don't mean to be," returned Doris a little stricken. "I never was ungrateful. I hate ingratitude. I despise it. I do not believe I could be ungrateful for the least service anybody offered to do me; and should I be apt to grow heartless all of a sudden, when my dearest wishes had come to pass? — when, for the first time in my life, I had it in my power to cease wild and vain wishing, and realize what I had been dreaming about ever since I was a very little girl?"

"After all," said the wily young man, "it is not your gratitude I want. You may be grateful to my father if you like."

"I shall be very grateful to Mr. Decker."

"Yes, you may be grateful to him. He listened to me when my hopes were chimeras: he showed me what was false and what was true. Do you know what I used to think, Miss Doris, down at the seaside, when I sat talking to your grandfather, and looking at you? 'If,' so my fancies ran, — 'if I could but re-instate this little princess in her lost kingdom, I should be content to look at her from afar off the rest of my life, feeling happy and proud that I once had it in my power to serve her.'"

This was a pretty speech; and it moved Doris, although not past the point of objecting to the midway parting of the young fellow's blond hair. At the same time, his apparent disinterestedness held its ground in a generous mind like hers, and she felt she ought to overlook some of these trifling incongruities. Because faith and devotion like this turn up cheaply, one ought not to feel the necessity of going abroad after more costly products.

"Nowadays," pursued George, "I am not so generous."

Doris looked at him wistfully.

"Are you not?" she asked softly. "It is so good to be generous. It is such a pity to grow selfish."

"I am abominably selfish," he cried, as if applauding his own weaknesses. "It is a terrible falling-off. Now, I used to find a sort of satisfaction in the thought

of your happiness and your success, and my own loss and despair. That is all over, I am afraid. Whatever happens, I want your happiness: if the question is between your happiness and mine, I want yours. I count myself altogether out. Still, I confess I have an intense longing to be happy."

"I hope you may be," said Doris candidly. She was all the time wondering vaguely what she ought to say and do. George did not require to enumerate his many kindnesses. He had done every thing for her. His coming into her life had been like the ringing of the bell at the play: up went the curtain, and the drama had begun. It did seem as if he ought to have some *rôle* of his own, besides that of a sort of explanatory and unhappy chorus. His good-nature disarmed her. Although he said he was selfish, he seemed to think little or nothing of himself.

"I expect to come to you in a few days," he pursued, "and tell you that your grandfather has gained his suit; that the verdict is on our side; that you have at least two hundred thousand dollars for your very own. I wonder what you will say to me then."

"It would be very difficult to say any thing to express half I felt: it would be impossible," cried Doris eagerly, her cheeks flushing, her eyes shining.

"If you said any thing to me in mere words," struck in George on the instant, "I should be certain that you felt I had deserved nothing from you. It would show me how I stood with you: that I was all very well for a servant, a vassal, a man of business; but that I could claim no feeling of your heart, ne

share in your life. All my future dates from the moment I come to you with the decision in the suit."

Doris, disturbed by George's persistent gaze, trembled as with a fever.

"You will be right to treat me coldly; a thousand times right, if you really do despise me," he went on.

"Despise you!" murmured Doris, the tears rolling down her cheeks. "You know I could never despise you."

"What is it, then, that you will say to me?"

"It will be safest to say nothing at all," said Doris, suddenly laughing. For a moment she had felt terrified by the situation. She had had a strange feeling, as if she was committing herself to some course which must end by leading her into a future she hated. But after all, there was nothing mysterious, nothing obscure about it.

"If you say nothing at all," cried George, "I shall take your silence to mean what I please."

"It will be safest to take it to mean what *I* please," returned Doris. She gave a little imperious nod. There had been too much of this foolish talk: she did not fancy the smile on his lips, nor the gleam in his eyes. She wanted to dismiss the subject.

SWEET BELLS JANGLED.

TRUAX had not seen Doris for three weeks, when he met her one evening at a private view of paintings. Like heirs just come into estates, like lovers in their honeymoon, he and Mrs. Warrington had avoided society, and were supposed by the rest of the world to find too much pleasure in each other's companionship to seek the every-day amusements going on about them. Business pressed with Truax in these days; and he had found very little time, even for proper duties of courtship. It had seemed to him a lucky accident, that, as soon as his engagement was announced, he had become immersed in the whirl of preparations for mid-winter work.

On this particular evening he had accompanied Katharine to the gallery; then, while she was negotiating the purchase of a water-color picture, had left her, and gone wandering listlessly about. When he came upon Doris, the sight of her was, perhaps, an answer to a quest: at least, he paused on the instant, and advanced no farther, but continued to stand, not exactly watching her, yet keeping her, in a measure, under his observation. His first impulse was to wonder whether she had changed, or whether she had merely grown unfamiliar. She was not unaccompanied: she had an attendant who devoured her with his

eyes, who listened eagerly to every word that fell from her lips, whose footsteps followed the least hint of direction from her capricious movements. The young girl herself was radiant. She had apparently learned some easy lessons of talking without thought, of feeling without faith. She looked at the pictures, and commented upon them. Some of her words met the ears of Truax, fretting and vexing him. Twice she passed him, her glance never, for an instant, resting upon him, but always upon the young man at her elbow, with whom she conversed incessantly; not so much conversed as chatted, not even so much chatted as communicated with after the fashion of young and amorous birds, with flutters, and coquettings, and inarticulate yet eloquent chirps.

"That is a very successful girl," somebody remarked in Truax's ear. He looked up. It was Barrington, — a brother lawyer and bachelor, and a man of fashion besides.

"To whom do you allude?" said Truax.

"Oh! I thought you seemed to be watching Miss Gordon. I don't know whether you are going to let her come in for a quarter of a million or not; but she seems to be carrying every thing else before her, and I am a devout believer in luck."

"So am I, — a believer in bad luck."

"That is very good from you, the luckiest man in town. I don't care much for girls myself, except to look at; but she is an exquisite creature. By Jove! none but artists ought to be permitted to look at her. And to think that such a puppy as George Decker is

to become the owner of that magnificent, unspoiled young beauty ! ”

“ Do you mean to say he is engaged to her ? ”

“ Oh, yes ! Mrs. Lyon admitted the fact to me. All the young fellows concede the inside track to him nowadays. For a time the girl was considerably run after, was loaded down with bouquets and all that ; now I’ve noticed she accepts nobody else’s attentions. It is perfectly natural, no doubt. They grew up together, or something of the sort ; and, if the Gordons have the most meagre chance of getting back any of their money, they have to thank these Deckers.”

“ It is the most natural thing in the world,” returned Truax. “ In natural selection every thing goes by contraries, by paradox, by absurdity.”

Barrington laughed as if he had listened to a witticism. Truax moved away with a bland smile, and began anew to pass from one room to another. He exchanged a word or two with Katharine, whom Dr. Ford had joined. Alan made a feint of resigning his place, but was answered by a wave of the hand, and Truax passed on. More than once he saw Doris again, and regarded her with a look of curiosity. She did not see him, so that nothing in his glance could trouble or surprise her. He was ready to swear that it flattered her beyond measure to have all the world know her youthful beauty was the object of George’s idolatry, and that in the satisfaction of such vanity she forgot every thing else. All lovers are, perhaps, ready to conclude that the object of their affections, unsolaced by their own passion, declines willingly upon a range of lower feelings and a narrower heart, etc.

Truax was, however, prevented from pitying the young girl by her brilliant aspect, which seemed to-night actually to radiate, and proclaim her happiness. He need not have felt any remorse for the careless hours he had spent with her: nothing had been stolen from her joy. The night he had last parted from her at Mrs. Lyon's, he had thought of her till morning with confused, passionate longing, in which the only clear and coherent idea was the self-accusing cry with which he realized her desolation. She was desolate, she was alone, and he could not comfort her. An unspeakable agony had torn him at this thought. The very climax of absurdity now seemed to him to have been reached, when he saw, in clear juxtaposition, the real and the ideal.

Doris had by this time rejoined Mrs. Lyon, and Truax went up and met his cousin's outstretched hand.

"Who on earth would have dreamed of seeing you here, John?" said she. "Where have you been, and what have you been doing of late?"

"I have been behaving quietly and decently, as becomes a corpse," returned Truax. "as somebody said of himself once before."

"So, now you are an engaged man, you consider yourself as good as dead and buried?"

"One has to pass through the shades, in order to reach Paradise."

"You feel certain, then, of getting to Paradise?"

"By Paradise you are pretending to refer to married life? I notice that you married people only talk in that way to the uninitiated."

"Oh! marriage is a very good condition, provided one doesn't think too curiously whether or not it realizes one's expectations. I never was in Paradise, so I can't compare the two estates. When does your engagement end, John? When are you going to be married?"

"God knows!" returned Truax piously, with a tone of not venturing to meddle with providential intentions.

"I thought it would probably come before Lent."

"Lent! When is Lent? I know nothing about Lent."

"Lent comes early this year, — soon after February enters."

"No respectable Christian is ever married in Lent?"

"Not my sort of a Christian. You must be married at Easter."

"Very well."

"Are you really to be married at Easter?"

"I have heard something about its happening in June."

"Yes, that is a delightful month. You will have roses with your raptures, and may take all summer for a bridal trip."

"What have you been doing this winter, Bessy?" Truax inquired with an affectionate smile.

"Every thing," Mrs. Lyon returned with a successful laugh. "So far, I never had a pleasanter winter. It is so delightful to have Doris to take about with me."

Truax had all this time looked only at his cousin. He now turned, and regarded the young girl, who

was deeply engaged in looking for a number in her catalogue, assisted by George Decker.

"I congratulate Miss Gordon upon her bad memory," said he sharply. "She has evidently forgotten me."

"So it seems," returned Mrs. Lyon, a trifle embarrassed. "Are you alone? Where is Katharine?"

"She was buying a picture, and I left her discussing it with the artist and two experts. It was more than I could listen to. I like a picture, but the phrase of the critics bore me to death."

"Doris!" called Mrs. Lyon. "Here is my cousin John waiting to speak to you."

Doris turned on the instant, shook hands with Truax, smiled softly and sweetly in his face, and asked him how he liked the pictures.

"I have not been looking at the pictures," he returned: "I have been looking at you, Miss Gordon, and wondering why you did not condescend to notice me."

"To notice you!" cried Doris. "I like the water-colors too well to care for any thing else. I have not seen you, Mr. Truax: I have seen no one."

"Not even Mr. Decker?" inquired Truax.

"Mr. Decker has been extremely useful," rejoined Doris with unmistakable earnestness. "Mr. Decker is excellent at finding the numbers. To be sure, he knows nothing whatever about pictures, and, by a singular fatality, picks out only the worthless ones for approbation."

"Whatever is your favorite is mine, Miss Gordon," Mr. Decker put in, with impressive gallantry.

"Favorites? I don't dare to have favorites," said Doris half indignantly. "One of the critics was introduced to me, and asked me if I were interested in art. I told him I knew nothing about it, but that I knew what pleased me. He was quite in a passion, and gave me a long lecture on the impropriety of limiting myself to a narrow stand-point of individual taste. He says that what makes Americans so hopelessly inartistic is their self-consciousness and their want of abandon."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Mr. George Decker, as if firmly convinced against all former cherished theories.

"Indeed!" cried Mrs. Lyon in a tone of defiance of all such presumptuous criticism.

"*In-deed*," said Truax, and smiled at Doris.

She held her audience, and continued to talk easily and fluently, while her listeners threw in monosyllables largely expressive of assent. The critic had discovered two or three pictures for her, painted by undoubted geniuses among his intimate acquaintances, and had pointed out beauties of which she had before seen nothing. Doris was generous of her freshly-acquired knowledge, and candidly imparted it to Truax. He listened intelligently while she proved with incontestable arguments that nothing which is sincere and truthful, and a portrayal of the artist's idiosyncrasy, ought to be rejected as a deviation from nature. The occasion offered exceptional advantages for eloquence, and Truax made no effort to stem the tide. At first he listened with a sort of amusement, telling himself that the pretty child was trying to behave like a

woman, and that he would humor her. As she went on, however, apparently sincerely engrossed in her own themes, he no longer dared believe that she was acting. Of old, their intercourse had been free and frank, not only in words, but in that more intimate language of looks and smiles which constantly fills out the blanks of mere syllabled utterance. To-night she merely turned her face towards him : her eyes, so far as he was concerned, had no meaning ; her light laughter, no significance. He began to experience a poignant pain : for the first time to have her beauty mean nothing to him, suggest nothing, promise nothing, — to have it mock him with its happiness, its independence of even the most careless thought of him, — filled him at first with melancholy, then with anger.

He finally began to tire of her clever opinions. He wanted to get her to himself, — to force her to look at him, to speak to him. He longed to test the reality of her seeming self-possession, to see whether he had lost the hold he once had upon her.

“Speaking of pictures,” said he, the first time she made a pause, “there is one I want to show you. With my cousin’s permission, I will take you into the other room.”

“Very well,” said Mrs. Lyon. “Mr. Decker shall take me to look for my husband : he was to be here by this time.”

This arrangement was satisfactory to Truax if to no other of the four. Mr. George Decker could barely hold his disappointment in check, and looked quite chap-fallen.

Doris moved away with a princess-like air, but grew suddenly mute. When her companion had led her into the adjoining room, he looked about for a deserted bench, and seated her upon it. She sank down, and stared vacantly at the wall.

"Is that the picture?" she demanded, indicating some sort of a vague sketch which hung before her.

"No, Miss Gordon: there is no picture. For Heaven's sake, don't let us say another word concerning such wretched daubs."

"*Wretched daubs!* You allude to these beautiful pictures?"

"I allude to these pictures. There is no beauty in the whole lot of them."

"Not in that sea-piece? Did you observe that water? It was very good."

"Very good gravy: there was no water about it."

"Do you really know any thing about pictures, Mr. Truax?"

"Nothing under the sun."

"Then, why do you try to destroy my pleasure in them?"

Truax looked at her intently. A spot of red burned on either cheek, her eyes blazed, and her lips were angry.

"You want to give yourself the pleasure of seeing what does not exist?"

"Oh, you are so cold, so cynical, so heartless!"

The force of her ejaculation almost took away his breath. There could be no doubt of her earnestness.

They regarded each other for a moment in silence.

Truax broke the pause by repeating her words aloud, —
“Cold, cynical, heartless !”

The phrase seemed to please him : he repeated it, not exactly in a tone of conviction, but as if weighing its meaning and value.

Doris had time to calm down. The spots of color died away from her cheeks, and she looked up at him with a childlike expression of countenance, embarrassed and rather wistful, and half held out her hands to him.

“Indeed,” she went on to say, growing all the time more and more covered with confusion, “the pictures are very good. You ought to like them. I read in the papers that the exhibition is considered excellent.”

But the question of the value of the paintings had lost all interest for Truax.

“I am cold, cynical, heartless, am I?” said he.

“That was a very foolish besides being a very presumptuous speech. Perhaps you did not know that my temper is very bad, — so very bad that my friends have to forgive me much. You must take my word for it, Mr. Truax, that I meant nothing of the sort.”

“You seemed definitely, terribly in earnest.”

“Please forgive me.”

“If that indictment be true, I ought to ask forgiveness on my knees. Well, I am ready to do it.”

But Doris fancied there was a trifle of amusement behind his intended humility. There had been a time, when, watching him and listening to him, she had felt that he never could betray, that he must always rest and sustain her. Simply seeing him, she used to feel certain of his honesty and single-heartedness. Now, she was on her guard.

"I will go down on my knees and ask your forgiveness," reiterated Truax.

She laughed. "Here?"

"Oh, yes!"

"Now?"

"Without doubt."

"But would Mrs. Warrington like it?" demanded Doris, still laughing. "She is looking at us this moment. She is just behind you with Dr. Ford."

Truax looked a little bored, and turned; but Katharine and the doctor had passed on.

"You see she is quite indifferent," said he. "She leaves me to do whatever I like. Tell me," he exclaimed with a steady gaze into Doris's face, "what you meant when you arraigned me in that way."

"I meant nothing."

"It seemed to me you meant a great deal. Once we were friends."

She nodded and smiled at him,—a smile which dazzled, but did not warm.

"And now to-night we seem far less than friends."

She continued to look straight at him, the smile gradually dying away from her features.

"You agree, then," pursued Truax, pushing the question, "that we are now considerably less than friends."

"In one way you are my enemy," returned Doris.

"Oh! don't allude to that. We don't carry the vexations of business into every-day life. Besides 'enemy' is far too big a word for the occasion. A question of law is not a matter for private feeling.

Now, if I were your enemy, I should be anxious to thwart you, injure you" —

"And are you not trying to do so?" interrupted Doris.

He made a half-angry gesture.

"You talk like a child," said he. "You don't know — you can't begin to guess — I would do any thing in the world for you."

Doris flushed crimson, and seemed about to speak, then checked herself.

"What were you going to say?" inquired Truax gently and seriously.

"If you would do any thing in the world for me, why not let me have my little fortune?" she exclaimed in a wilful, spoiled-child manner.

Truax gave her a strange look. He seemed to be oppressed.

"Tell me something," said he imperiously.

She answered his command with a frank, clear glance.

"Are you going to marry George Decker?" he asked in the tone of a man whose tongue is parched with thirst.

She glanced away from him as if startled, then looked back with suddenly regained composure.

"It depends," she said.

"Depends? Depends upon what?"

"If grandpapa gets the decision he wants," she explained in a soft, clear voice, and half smiling.

"Do you mean to say that you have promised, if the Deckers get you the case, to marry that young man?"

She stared at him with surprise. She was puzzled by his looks: he had grown pale, and his whole expression was changed.

"It is not exactly like that," she said in a deliberate, explanatory way. "The matter is very simple. Mr. George Decker has been very good to me, — I" —

She was about to go on, but was interrupted by the appearance of her aunt and uncle, and George Decker himself.

They came up talking and laughing, addressing Truax with good-natured badinage. They had been looking for him everywhere. Why had he kept Doris so long? Everybody had gone or was going. They had begun to believe that he must have taken Doris home, for it was so late.

They all walked to the top of the staircase together. Left alone, Truax remembered to look around for Katharine; but she was nowhere in the rooms. He concluded with some relief that Dr. Ford had gone back with her. Nothing could have suited him better. He was curiously disturbed, and wished to see no one until he was calmer.

"SO RUNS THE WORLD AWAY."

THE moment Mrs. Warrington had caught sight of Truax talking earnestly to Doris on the bench in the gallery, she expressed an inclination to go home.

"Let us walk, Alan," said she: "it is a fine night."

Accordingly the two turned out, and walked along the quiet squares under the clear winter sky brilliantly set with stars. It was long since the doctor had enjoyed such an opportunity of being alone with Katharine; and he found a peculiar charm in the mere trifling necessity of clasping her furred cloak about her throat, of helping her lay the train of her rich dress over his arm. He offered these attentions with an air which made her smile. She would have said that she could have experienced no satisfaction in her present mood; but Alan's kindness soothed, even sustained her. Truax's way of acquitting himself of all similar duties was so indifferent, so perfunctory, that, with the best right in the world to claim it, Katharine usually felt guilty in requiring the least service from him. There was something too Olympian in his height and gait, something too royal in his ease, to be disturbed by petty requirements.

"If you ever marry, Alan," she felt herself impelled to say as they walked along, "your wife will be a very happy woman."

"I have not the least intention of marrying," Alan returned, putting almost too much seriousness into his words.

"You were intended for a *père de famille*," she continued. "I shall insist on your fulfilling your mission. I like to think of you in the centre of calm domestic pleasures at your fireside between wife and children."

"Answer me, Katharine," cried Alan in a trembling voice which betrayed deep feeling. "Do you think it fair to play with me in this way?"

Katharine looked at him: he could see her face by the light of the stars. She was confused, and when she spoke there was much hesitation in her voice.

"Play with you? I hardly know what you mean."

"You talk to me of marriage and household joys of my own," he cried, his whole form trembling, "when you know how I have felt in the past, when you know how I feel in the present, and must continue to feel in the future. I wonder sometimes if I ought not to go away; if it is right, just, or honorable for me to remain near you, snatching a sort of desperate joy from merely seeing you, touching your hand, even your dress, discussing the health of the children with you. Often and often I have left your house in a mood, which, under the circumstances, makes me accuse myself almost of a crime. In such moments I tell myself that I will go away, no matter where; that our paths shall lie apart; that I must not, can not, go on in this way."

Katharine almost shuddered

"No, you shall not go away," she cried. "I cannot understand how such an idea could occur to you," she went on, apparently not only agitated, but angry. "I have fancied you so generous, so disinterested."

They had by this time almost reached her house, and neither spoke again until they stood at the door.

"I think I will not go in," Alan remarked then. "I had better not."

"You must, you shall!" cried Katharine imperiously. "You were going to look at Davy: you said he was not well."

She held out both her hands to him while she spoke. He neither resisted nor wished to resist her. He followed her in; and they entered the library, and sat down before the fire. She looked at him constantly, although he averted his eyes.

"You are pale, you are thin," she said softly: "you are not well, and I have not observed it. How heartless I am!"

He laughed slightly.

"Rather heartless, I think."

"You were not in earnest when you spoke of going away?"

"More in earnest than I can express to you. Let me only see my way clear to getting out of New York, and I am a man again, and find resolution and energy. I shall take you by surprise some day. I sha'n't make any fine speeches at parting, nor linger long when I have once made up my mind."

She regarded him with amazement: she was rarely surprised, but to-night he had surprised her.

"Why, Kate!" he exclaimed, answering her unspoken reproach. "You don't need me."

"I need you always."

He shook his head. "I confess I don't see how. You are engaged to marry a man with whom you are in love. You are happier than you have ever been before, — so you have more than once assured me, — and, in a few months, will be more happy even than now. It is impossible for a married woman to have friendships. Truax is tolerably indifferent, or perhaps I ought to say too lofty-minded to care for small matters; yet, with all his generosity, he would object to my creeping about the house like a tame cat. Yet, even if he permitted this old habit of intimacy to continue, I am not the poor creature to wish it. I have seen you once as the wife of another man; but in those days, although I always worshipped you, it was the worship of a queen throned high out of my reach. Nowadays it is different. I have long permitted myself the presumption of a hope that you would be my wife, — my wife; my own, — my very own; and the man who takes you from me robs and despoils me, is my enemy. I will never come near you after Truax is your husband. As I said before, our paths must now lie apart. They shall lie apart!"

He had spoken these words rapidly, alternately looking at her, then averting his face. Now that he paused, he was breathing hurriedly, his lips were trembling. The tears had rushed to Katharine's eyes: she was strongly moved; and now, hastily rising, she approached him, and, taking his hand, pressed it between both hers.

"Dear Alan!" she murmured.

"You play the coquette with me."

She flushed to her hair, and released his hand.

"I don't mean to accuse you," said he, looking up.

"I have said more than I ought to have said, and I do not attempt to excuse myself. I have sometimes felt a feverish longing to be understood, and that pitiful weakness has impelled me to-night. I am not a beggar. I don't hold out my hand for alms. I don't want your capricious kindness. I see that you are a little touched, and moved out of yourself. I dare say, you would be very good to me if I were to ask you. I might hold your little hands, solace myself with a half possession of your loveliness, put into my heart and mind memories which would haunt me for years. Sweet Kate! A touch of yours may bless a man who loves you as I do. Then to-morrow night, if I came in, you would be sitting with your lover, your chosen husband. How do you suppose I should feel then? No, I have not wholly lost my senses. I want to go away, and I will go away."

At this moment it became evident to them both that the servant was admitting some late visitor at the door.

"That is Truax!" cried Alan, rising on the instant, all his instincts alert. "I will not stay. You will hardly want me to stay."

Katharine looked at him beseechingly.

"If you go now," said she in a low voice, "you will come back."

"Come back? Have I not always come back?"

"But promise me, — promise me sacredly."

He was going away without another word, but she caught his hand.

"Your sacred promise," she insisted.

"To do what?"

"To stay here, not to avoid me, to come back soon."

Truax was already in the room. He was regarding the two a little dazzled.

"I followed you," he said. "I found the coachman waiting, Kate, and sent him home. I had looked everywhere for you, and could not find you. I took it for granted Ford had brought you back."

"Yes," Katharine answered rather dully. "Alan brought me back."

"Are you going, doctor?" Truax inquired, sitting down in his favorite chair before the fire, in an attitude of ease.

"Presently, as soon as I have looked after Davy a little."

"What ails Davy?"

"He had symptoms of croup last night, and they are apt to return."

"Poor little man! I wonder if I went through these processes before I hardened into rugged youth."

Alan did not answer, but said good-night, and left the room.

"Did I interrupt you and Ford?" Truax inquired.

"Interrupt us? Oh, no!"

His inquiry had been a mere commonplace, and the scene of which he had been almost a spectator had made no impression upon him.

"Ford is a worthy fellow," he remarked. "I wonder some woman has not fallen in love with his virtues."

"He is well worth falling in love with," Katharine returned with more than usual force.

"So I said," rejoined Truax lazily. "Much better worth falling in love with than I am, for instance."

Katharine said nothing. He laughed.

"I admire your silent acquiescence. Don't you sometimes repent your choice? Don't you sometimes say, 'Here is this excellent man who loved me to distraction, who still loves me, who will always continue to love me, whom I know to the core as honest, faithful, true, yet whom I have slighted for a' " —

"You shall not laugh at him," Katharine broke out suddenly. "He is not an object of compassion: he is not a poor creature such as you hold him to be."

"I assure you I never thought of him in that light," said Truax courteously. "I admire and like him with all my heart."

It began to occur to him that Katharine was not in her usual mood; and, to explain the half peremptoriness of her replies, he reverted to his reminiscences of the evening. She had seen him talking with Doris; and the readiest interpretation he could put upon her coldness was, that she was perhaps piqued at his desertion. At the same time he was able to reflect that he had been ready at any moment to attend her home or elsewhere, and that she had chosen to leave the rooms with Alan Ford, without a word of explanation of her design, thus putting him to considerable trouble to search for her afterwards. In common justice, one fault balanced the other.

"Did you decide to buy the picture?" he asked in a tone of admirable good-nature.

"Oh, yes! Alan liked it. I decided at once, when he gave his verdict in its favor."

"He is an expert, I suppose."

"He has admirable taste in all matters."

Truax laughed.

"Lucky fellow! Let me see, it was a sea-view."

"No, it was a landscape,—a pool among high grasses with trees behind,—and through the trees a sunset."

"Oh! I had forgotten."

His eyes grew abstracted, and fastened their gaze on the fire. He saw constantly before him Doris's tall, slight figure,—her arch, brilliant face. The vision stimulated, puzzled, enthralled him; and, compared with that too vivid fancy, this present reality seemed a sadly meagre entertainment. However, the silence growing oppressive, he wrenched himself away from the luxurious reverie. It was so still that the faint ticking of the French clock was distinctly audible, and even the hissing of the burning coals in the grate became impressive. Truax was anxious to break down the sort of barrier Katharine's coldness and his own embarrassment had erected between them, and for almost the first time in his life cast about in his mind for some suitable topic on which he could grow cordial and expand into geniality before he should leave her. Every subject, however, which presented itself, seemed fraught with danger: each by some invisible link was associated with his present dominant

idea, and in one shape or another pointed to Doris. The pause grew seemingly endless. Truax gave it up, reflecting, that, after all, he had spoken last: besides, it was clearly a woman's mission to be diverting, and relieve the monotony. Where the sex was concerned, he had always had a strong generalizing bias, and only in one case were his views special.

As he gained ease, Katharine, on her side, began to find the silence irksome. She broke it with a half laugh.

"We are very dull," she remarked.

"That is, I am very dull. I used to doubt my fitness for married life, but I begin to see that I have the true conjugal gift. Husbands and wives do not find it necessary to entertain each other, I believe."

Katharine blushed, either from embarrassment or anger.

"Are you not a little too cynical concerning married life?" she asked. "Does your tone on the subject represent your real idea? or is it a way you have of joking?"

"You said we were dull; and I was merely reflecting, that, in all likelihood, many such quiet, dull evenings would come to pass by this very fireside. By that time you will look upon my dulness as a matter of course."

"To enliven it I will invite Miss Gordon to visit us," said Katharine, smiling easily. "She has the art of putting, not only words into your mouth, but fire and meaning into your face."

Truax looked at her while she spoke, with a slightly

bewildered expression. He was wondering more about her meaning than he was influenced by any personal idea.

"A fascinating little creature," he said quietly; "half child, half woman."

"Engaged to Mr. Decker's son, I hear."

"I doubt it: I very much doubt it."

"I was assured that Mrs. Lyon did not contradict the rumor, — merely said that she did not care to receive congratulations until she announced the engagement."

"She will never marry him," said Truax in a low but irritated voice. "They may think that he has a chance of winning the lawsuit for her. In such an event" —

"In such an event it would seem only fair that he should win the girl as well."

"He will win nothing," declared Truax with a sort of angry decision. "They are all pursuing a chimera. I'll stake my professional reputation on my success in the case. I'll not let them have an inch to stand on, — not an inch." He had risen from his chair, and began moving about, putting all obstacles away with something not unlike a fierce impatience. His features had all set into the hardness of iron: he looked angry, dangerous.

"I ought to feel very much obliged to you," said Katharine. "I want my title clear beyond dispute. But for all that, I should not object to give Miss Gordon some pretty little slice of the property. I confess it seems to me rather an interesting love-affair, quite

a romance. I like these marriages among young, happy people."

"She shall have no dowry out of your money," cried Truax, "not a cent."

"The loss of all her hopes will be a very disagreeable matter to the poor girl. I wonder if young Decker is disinterested, and will be willing to marry her if she has no money."

"Willing to marry her?" He bit his lip angrily.

"Alan tells me he is a clever young man."

"A pedantic ape."

"He is young. Remember he is twelve or thirteen years your junior. He will have time to improve. He and Miss Gordon will make a very charming young couple. My own early experience was of that sort that a suitable marriage is pleasant for me to look at, — so pleasant it makes my heart ache. It is the cruellest of experiences for youth to marry age."

Such a confidence, on Katharine's part, of her own feelings regarding her first marriage might at another time have possessed keen interest for Truax; but at present he was fuming too angrily to notice it.

"She'll not marry him," he asseverated.

"What will she do, then? Her grandfather is ruined. Did I not know that she was a very particular friend of yours, I should think you regarded her with deadly animosity."

"H'm!" muttered Truax, "that is plain enough."

He was curiously disturbed. He felt a sort of anger which it might have been a relief to allow to burst forth, exploding like a bomb; but, at the same time, he was conscious of behaving foolishly.

"I think I'll go," said he, fumbling at his watch, although he had been staring into the clock-face for the past ten minutes. "Half-past eleven ! quite time I said good-night." He picked up his hat, which had fallen on the floor.

"It is not late," said Katharine. "Sit down, and let us be comfortable for a few minutes. We do not seem to have had any satisfactory talk."

He sat down, still holding his hat. Katharine began telling him about some plan of entertainment, making a long recital. He listened apparently with the closest attention. Suddenly, however, he started up.

"Good-night," said he abruptly.

"Are you really going ? "

"Yes." He looked as if words hovered on his lips ready to escape him, but he said no more. At first he merely pressed her hand ; then, catching the sweet look of her uplifted eyes, he put his arm about her waist, and kissed her twice.

The impetuosity of his embrace startled Katharine, who was not accustomed to this fire in his glance and vivacity in his manner. But the change only excited her curiosity, without inspiring her with satisfaction. She seemed to have a suspicion of what was passing in his mind. She had seen one man that evening vitally in earnest, and such reality had acted as a magical test, and dispelled illusions.

DREEING HIS WEIRD.

THE idea of Doris's engagement to young Decker was far from losing influence with Truax as he became familiarized with it. He had had many unsettled views of late ; but, concerning this, his mind could harbor neither doubts nor indecision. He had no disquiets of impotent thinking. He determined to see Doris again, and to see her alone, to instruct her by his experience, and teach her to be on her guard against a mistake which must spoil her whole life. This course seemed to him not only a relief to himself, but an essential duty towards her.

The suit, *Gordon vs. Warrington*, etc., had been in progress ten days : the evidence was all in, the arguments had been made, and the decision would probably be reached on the morrow, when Truax's long looked for opportunity came. He had attended a dinner given for some distinguished guest : they had sat down early, in order that the celebrity might attend a reception afterwards, and rose from the table between nine and ten, when Truax made his way to the house with the rest. He had expected to find Doris at the assembly ; but the night was so bad that not more than two score of ladies were in the rooms. Mrs. Lyon was among them, but not Miss Gordon. At first it did not occur to Truax that she could be absent ;

and he walked about, searching restlessly for her. He felt irritated and annoyed at not instantly finding her. When he was obliged to speak to any one, he did it in a mechanical, listless way. He avoided his cousin, not wishing to suffer her curious scrutiny, nor to feel forced to answer her innumerable questions. After a time, however, unable to avoid her any longer, and noticing that she was watching his every movement, he approached, and addressed her. All his hope and contrivance were now set upon seeing Doris, and it was not wholly impossible that Mrs. Lyon would offer him the coveted opportunity.

"I have been wanting to speak to you," she said at once. "I feel very proud of you. All the men have been telling me that your speech at the dinner was clever and delightful. If I might only have heard it!"

"I talked, my dear Bessy, like the seven wise men of Greece all speaking at once. Nothing is so easy as to make a good impression upon a tableful of men who have dined well."

"It agreed with you. How animated you look! You have quite a color," said Mrs. Lyon admiringly.

"I walked here, and the snow and sleet cut my face. It is a terrible night. I wonder that you dared venture out."

"James told me to stay at home, but what was the use? Mrs. Warrington is not here, I think."

"No. I doubt if she was asked. I heard nothing about it."

"Does she like to have you go about by yourself?"

"Go about by myself! How should I go about?"

"Go about to parties without her?"

"She is well aware that I carry everywhere an inward monitor. At this very moment

"I see a hand you do not see, which beckons me away:
I hear a voice you do not hear, which says I must not stay."

"Nonsense! Katharine must be very exacting if she will not let you stay five minutes, and talk with your own cousin."

"I was alluding to the still, small voice which speaketh within me."

Mrs. Lyon tossed back her head, and laughed slightly.

"I think I have known occasions, John, when the still, small voice was unheard, and you found your impulses pleasant." She hoped her allusion rankled; so went on, "If you did wrong, I hope you confessed it at once. 'Tis the proper time for full confession now. Before marriage a man may make a clean breast of stealing his neighbor's wife, for instance. After marriage it is a different thing: he must not even seem to look over the hedge at her."

"I never heard a more tempting theory. I almost long to prove the truth of your words."

He half-turned away.

"What, are you going? I suppose you want to confess to Katharine before you sleep."

Truax, however, had no notion of going yet; and his pretended start was only a feint.

"Where is Miss Gordon, by the way?" he inquired.

"At home, sitting before the fire."

"Alone?"

"Mr. George Decker was with her."

Truax frowned.

"Oh! he came away with us," Mrs. Lyon hastened to say with the instinct of a careful *chaperone*. "He had been there since six o'clock. Doris had had quite enough of his devotion. She is not engaged to him yet, although the whole world believes so. It will end in that, but I will not allow her to be hurried."

"Yet you will permit her to go on encouraging him?"

"Encouraging him? Why not?" She looked at him calmly and confidently, smiling all the time. "Do you know, John," she said as if amused, "that, when you were talking about conscience, for a moment I absolutely believed you were alluding to your flirtation with poor little Doris? You did flirt with her a little, you know."

Truax regarded her with a large, serious glance, and showed no discomposure. Mrs. Lyon proceeded, —

"I was ambitious in those days, and saw through my own pre-possessions. I asked too much. We women all begin so, then abate our claims. My first idea, John, I confess it in all its crudeness, was to marry you to Doris. I almost committed the absurdity of carrying my green corn to market. I actually thought you wanted it."

Truax nodded.

"I was engaged already," he said with no particular meaning, either in look or voice.

"I found it out just in time. No harm was done.

Now I can afford to be candid, and tell you that I was furious with you at first for spoiling the only match I ever tried to make. At last I recognize compensations. You are too old for Doris."

"No doubt, a century too old."

"Besides," whispered Mrs. Lyon, throwing a swift glance into his eyes, "*she is in love with somebody else.*"

"Nothing seems more probable," said Truax in an indifferent voice. "Well, good-night!"

He turned, and walked straight out of the room. Until this moment no definite intention had entered his mind, but now he felt no hesitations. He paused for a moment on the landing, then went slowly down the staircase. In the hall below he met James Lyon, who inquired with some animation where he was going.

Truax laughed. "How do you expect me to know where I am going?" said he. "I've been to a big dinner. Don't hold me responsible for what I do. Did you ever hear about Charles Lamb's making a fellow-guest promise, on their way to a banquet, to take him home afterwards? When the time came, the man inquired where he lived. 'That's your affair,' said Lamb, 'not mine. You undertook to convey me home, and I hold you to your bargain.'"

"Well, Truax," said Mr. Lyon, "I'll take you home if you need it."

"No, not to-night: nobody on earth is responsible for me to-night."

He put on his great coat, stamped his feet into the

overshoes which the servant brought, and crushed his hat low over his eyes.

"You're not going yet?" he said to Mr. Lyon.

"No, indeed! There's a capital supper to be served at half-past eleven. What takes you off?"

"Supper would be a doubtful blessing to-night."

"He must have dined pretty well," chuckled Lyon as the door slammed after the other.

Once in the street, Truax experienced a sense of relief. He had lost time, but it was not yet very late. He was carried on by an impetus which promised definite result to his undertaking. He felt certain that he should find Doris, and every thing combined to make the moment propitious for an interview.

It was the worst night of the winter. The snow lay half a foot deep on the pavements, and a cutting storm drove more and more furiously from the north-east. He pressed on steadily up town, then turned a corner, and walked a square east, where, in the shelter of the tall houses, he felt a momentary lull of the wind and sleet. Reaching Madison Avenue, he paused in front of Mr. Lyon's: the windows of the drawing-room were brilliantly lighted; accordingly, without any hesitation he went to the door, rang the bell, and inquired for Miss Gordon.

"Miss Gordon is not well," said the sleepy servant. "I do not know whether she is still up."

"If she is in the parlor, I should like to see her for a moment," Truax said with imperturbable serenity. He entered the hall, and divested himself of his snow-covered wrappings. The maid regarded him

doubtfully, then crept up stairs, and, returning, said that Miss Gordon wished to know the name of her visitor.

"I will announce myself," said Truax.

The moment he breathed the warm air of the house he felt stifled and exhausted. He clutched at the balustrade as he went up the stairs, his mind in a sort of dizzy whirl. A certain vivacity of desire, which had so far impelled him to seek Doris, no longer moved him; and a sudden wonder grew, why he had made this effort to find her. He had wanted to see her alone; and this happy chance, which at last rewarded his wooing of opportunity, promised him either salvation or perdition. Was he honest? Was he honorable in coming? Was he not in danger of uttering words which would mean too much? He had told himself that he must warn Doris; but of what danger? Of marrying an honest young fellow who loved her, and whom she loved; of securing a happy future. The fallacies on which he had thriven of late all at once shrivelled and fled. He was a veritable dog in the manger. He could not marry Doris himself, yet begrudged her to a luckier man. He no longer deceived himself. He had sought her with a selfish, insistent desire to keep her free and untrammelled. No man must have her: he loved her himself; he loved her most dearly. There was no other happiness, there was no other truth, there was no other life.

At the top of the stairs he met her face to face. As his eye fell on her, his hesitations, if hesitations they were, vanished. After all, it might be that the old

world would end to-night, and the new begin. All was not yet lost. She stretched out a little hand: it trembled, yet it was warm. She looked at him questioningly and half-frightened, not uttering a syllable. Her color came and went, and her eyes were feverishly bright.

Nothing in her look or manner induced him to regret the part he had undertaken. He no longer thought about himself, except as a man urged by fate. He realized that he was bound by chains; yet, impeded as he was, he felt as if he might gain freedom. He determined not alone to be free, but to be happy.

Doris murmured some vague greeting, but no other word was spoken. She led the way into the drawing-room; and he followed her, closing the door as he entered.

Once in the room, she looked at him again questioningly.

"I am glad to see you," she remarked soberly. "Aunt and uncle are out. I am all alone."

"I know that very well," exclaimed Truax, addressing her for the first time. "I came because I wanted to see you, and only you,—to speak to you unhindered. I have been a votary of opportunity lately, and began to believe that no happy chance would ever come. However, it is always the unexpected which happens. At last I find you alone."

"Has any thing happened?" asked Doris in a sort of bewilderment.

"Happened? Yes."

"Any thing about the lawsuit?"

"Good heavens! Is that all you care for?"

"Nothing concerns me so much," cried Doris in a trembling voice. "Indeed, it seems to me I care for nothing else."

She had grown scarlet, and spoke like one in a fever.

"Poor little girl!" said Truax tenderly. "Poor little girl! Don't hope any thing from it. Don't venture to hope any thing from it. There is just one little plank of safety for you,—no more. They may give you the original value of the land. They will in equity give you no more. In law they can give you no more."

While he declared her cause hopeless, her features had shrunk and grown pallid, until it seemed only a pitiful little baby-face he looked at: then she revived.

"That would be something," she burst out eagerly. "That would be a great deal: it would be enough. Oh, Mr. Truax!" she went on, "if the judge could but know how important this money is to grandpa, how his life hangs on it, more than his life, his faith in a righteous God, I am sure it would be given to us. I don't care for myself, I don't mind being poor; but it comes so hard to the old. It is so desolate down there. How can they bear it, unlightened by any comfort, any hope?"

"You say you don't care for yourself," said Truax, looking at her steadily.

"Not an atom."

"Then, why—why"—He began, then broke off

"You seem," he proceeded presently in a dry voice, "to have made a separate future for yourself."

"A separate future?"

"Yes, a separate future. You are going to be safe, you are going to be happy."

He spoke these words in a loud, angry tone; and his features were agitated by passion.

"I don't understand you," returned Doris, regarding him with the candor of a child.

"They say you are to marry young Decker."

She closed her eyes a moment as if weary.

"You do not know," she answered after a little pause, "what a temptation it has been to me to accept him." Truax groaned. "Ah!" she exclaimed more forcibly, as if moved by an irresistible impulse, "when a girl sees every thing smooth and sunshiny on the one hand, and on the other all trouble, storm, disaster, it is not difficult to choose."

"No, no!" murmured Truax faintly.

"Besides," she went on, "it has sometimes seemed to me that I had a debt to pay. If—if—if grandfather got his case, he might requite Mr. Decker's services by money; if he loses, how could I go on feeling all that heavy weight of obligation? These thoughts have been so constantly in my mind of late."

"Such ideas are false!" cried Truax with energy. "They rest on fallacy. They are worse than false,—they are vile. You would give yourself up for life to pay a paltry debt?"

"It is not mere money," said Doris sadly. "Mr. George Decker has been very good to me."

"And you are going to marry him?"

"I don't know: I have not yet promised."

"Thank God!" he said devoutly.

He spoke with such strong feeling that she gazed at him, perplexed. She had had it in her mind to tell him more; but in his words and his looks there was a certain wildness which restrained her. Hitherto neither had sat down; they had remained standing near the fireplace: now she went over to the sofa, and threw herself among the cushions.

He followed her across the room.

"Doris," he began in a low voice, "I used to have little at stake in the world: I kept one end in view, and made all things serve it. My heart had no place in my estimate of my needs. This state of mind is difficult for me to realize now. I can no longer tell how I began: to-night sees how I end. I have purchased knowledge of myself at a tolerably heavy cost. I tell you, I tell you solemnly, it would kill me to have you marry George Decker."

She looked at him startled and silent: she was breathing heavily, her lips were trembling.

He stretched out his hands to her.

"I cannot live without you," he muttered. "I am unalterably yours."

She turned from him almost fiercely. Her eyes flashed, and her cheeks burned; and when she spoke, it was with a vehemence which shook her all over, seeing his meaning take shape, and gather strength before her eyes.

"You have no right to tell me this, Mr. Truax, — you have no right."

"Why have I no right?"

"Because you are engaged to another woman."

"I am not married to another woman. Nothing save that is irreparable. I don't blame fate. I blame no one. All at once I found myself in a position, which, however brilliant, however exceptional, made me feel like a fly caught in a spider's net."

"Don't tell me this!" cried Doris. She regarded him with a sort of horror, and looked about as if for a chance of retreat.

He could not restrain a smile.

"What a child you are!" he exclaimed in a different tone. "I suppose, that, let me say what I will, I speak not only beyond your experience, but your power of comprehension, your interest even, or your wish to understand me. I have deluded myself. You don't care any thing about me. The young love the young. I am too old, too battered a fellow, to have touched your heart."

She was breathing heavily, and bit her lip as if repressing tears, and steadfastly averted her eyes.

"You know nothing of love, of course, that thirst so agonizing, yet so sweet." He sat down beside her, and lifted her hand in his; then, at her struggle to draw it away, he released it. "Do you remember," he asked, "the night you first heard I was engaged?"

She made no answer.

"I was going to ask instead," he went on, "if you remembered the night we were here alone, — the night I kissed the braid of your hair; but I reflected that your recollection must be different from mine. You

do not know, you could not even begin to understand, the bitterness of heart which came over me when I realized, that, instead of resigning myself to a powerful feeling towards you, I had self-imposed duties towards another." There was a silence.

"Doris!" he called imperatively, after a time.

She started as if she would have turned towards him, but had no courage to do so.

"Doris," he said again, "there is only one possible condition of life for me. I want you for my wife."

She looked at him now, her eyes full of fire.

"It is wrong for you to speak in this way to me," she burst out.

"I have no other right, no other wrong, no other pride, no other shame, no other victory, no other defeat, than that which concerns my love for you."

Her eyes sank before his.

"Dear," he said in a soft, penetrating voice, and smiling, "I believe you love me — as children may — a little."

Her lips parted, but she did not speak. He went on.

"Let us take the course our love for each other demands, and let the consequences follow."

She looked up at him. "I have believed in you," she said warningly.

"You think I am purchasing happiness at the price of my honor? Well, so be it. What matters? Dismiss childish illusions. Women all want a man to be strong, to be honorable. Then come times when conventional regulations must snap like dry twigs. I am sick to death of affectations and falsehoods. Be my liberator, — my saviour."

He paused, strangely agitated. Such scanty utterance mocked rather than assuaged his passion. But he stood in awe of her clear eyes. The thought of her youth, her innocence, the blank white pages of her heart, tied his tongue.

She took his hand in hers, bent her lips upon it, and pressed them there softly more than once.

"My dear child," said he, "I am afraid if you really loved me you could not do that."

She looked at him kindly, her cheeks tinged with a faint flush. Tears started to her eyes.

"Doris," he exclaimed, "why are those tears in your eyes?"

She put up her hand and wiped them away; but they brimmed over again. "It is very foolish," said she in a childish way; "but then, what you have said has touched me very much. It is my pride and my joy that you have cared a little for me, but I cannot help feeling the sadness of it too. The time will come when I shall only be glad; but now" —

"Yes, the time for our joy will come. Look at me, Doris."

"I am looking at you, Mr. Truax."

"Say to me, 'John, I am yours.'"

"I can't say it. I am not yours, sir: I cannot be yours."

"You don't care how much I may be suffering."

"One may bear suffering, if it is right to suffer."

He recoiled as if struck a blow, and stood at a little distance looking at her.

"Oh, little girl!" said he wearily, "you are young, so

very young,—too young to be in love. You would rather have me married to another woman,—separated from you, not only by distance, but by feeling, association, habit; you would rather have me, I say, another woman's husband than your own."

"If it were right for you, Mr. Truax, I would far rather it were so," said Doris with a stout heart.

He made no answer, but sank down on the nearest seat, and covered his face with his hand. The young girl had walked towards the door.

"I must say good-night," she said kindly but inflexibly.

Truax was not certain whether he answered, or not, as she left the room. He remained waiting in the same attitude for the next half-hour. At the end of that time he heard a key fumbling in the street-door, and realized that he must endure the ordeal of meeting Mr. and Mrs. Lyon, at last returned from the reception. He was on the stairway when they entered the hall.

"Halloo! Truax," exclaimed the owner of the house, evidently in the highest of spirits. "I see plainly I ought to have taken you home. I had my doubts about your capacity to take care of yourself."

"I wish you had with all my heart," said Truax.

Mrs. Lyon stood still, staring hard at him.

"Did you see Miss Gordon?" she asked in a dry voice.

"I did."

Mr. Lyon burst out laughing.

"I'll take you home now, if you say so, Truax."

"Indeed, James, you will do nothing of the sort," said Mrs. Lyon, indignant with all the world. "You may be thankful that you had a sensible wife to bring you home at the proper time."

"That's a fact. There is more in that than meets the ear, Truax," remarked the well-trained husband jocosely. "Depend upon it, my dear fellow, a wife is the best guidepost a man can have. I advise you to get married, — to get married directly."

"I'll think of it," Truax responded. He answered Mrs. Lyon's severe look with a smile, bade her good-night, and went out.

LAWYER AND DOCTOR.

IT was on the third day after the interview narrated in the preceding chapter that John Truax and Dr. Alan Ford met in the street. Each seemed a little surprised at the encounter, and stopped short; then, after a moment's awkward silence, exclaimed simultaneously, —

“I was on my way to see you.”

“To see me?” said Truax.

“To see me?” gasped Alan; then added, “not sick, I hope?”

“Well, no. You had something particular to speak to me about?”

“Exactly,” returned Alan.

In spite of the urgent errand which had driven each forth during office-hours to seek the other, now that they had met, even the simplest form of speech seemed a difficult matter.

“What on earth has he got to say to me?” was the secret thought of each, as one jealous interpretation after another chased through their minds.

“You had better come back with me to my office,” remarked Alan, after they had stared dumbly on the ground for a few minutes.

“Why not to my rooms? They are just as near.”

“It shall be as you choose. You know my quarters: I am not so familiar with yours.”

"Neither am I. I rarely see them between nine in the morning and eleven at night, and I find nothing cheerful about them at any season. I'll go sit down in your office-chair."

"All right," returned Alan.

They turned, and went down the street together in silence, each wishing that he had waited to hear the un conjectured matter of the other's business before committing himself.

They reached the house, entered the door, and turned into the dim office, which the low sun did not reach at this hour of the day, and sat down.

Almost for the first time in his life, Truax had given full swing to a certain imaginative impulse which inclined him to relieve his conscience. He had experienced powerful tumults of feeling of late, and wanted to make his moan to somebody. That he should fix upon Alan Ford as the victim of his confessions was no more than an accident, the result of a certain sympathetic quality in the doctor's mind.

"Ford," said Truax, beginning at once, "I could not better show the esteem in which I have always held you than by coming to you to-day. I have an enormous faith in you."

Alan's private conscience was in such a state that this preamble seemed little better than open accusation. He changed color violently, and averted his face.

"I find myself in a strange position," proceeded Truax. "I am treading paths I expected never to have entered."

Alan gave him a melancholy glance of comprehension.

"Have you seen Katharine lately?" asked Truax.

"Last night," answered the doctor in a stifled voice.

"I am engaged to marry the most beautiful, the noblest of women," cried Truax in a sort of climax of despair; "yet" —

Alan gave a groan, and sprang to his feet.

"Say what you have to say," he exclaimed with a feverish energy, strangely in contrast with his usual repose; "but don't beat about the bush; don't make phrases; don't put too fine a point on things. I find plenty of accusations in my own conscience: you need not press it home too strongly. Yet let me utter one word in my own defence: had you not been lukewarm, apparently indifferent, — had you not seemed to undervalue the position you had gained, I might have done better. As it was, the sight of your unconcern kept alive the hopeless struggle, and at last I succumbed."

He had spoken hastily, and more with a view of throwing off the causes of his own oppression than to enlighten Truax, who was gazing at him with surprise.

"I don't seem to understand you," the lawyer returned slowly. "I was certainly far from wishing to accuse you. I came to ask your advice about a certain matter."

"Of course you understand me," said Alan. "You want to show so lofty a generosity, that you can suspect nothing of a man who called himself your friend."

Truax was considerably puzzled, and experienced, moreover, a certain impatience of the emotion which showed itself in Alan's eyes, and forced his voice to tremble.

"I don't know to what hopeless struggle of feeling you allude," he remarked with a gentle asperity. "In any case, you have my sympathy; and, under all circumstances, I am absolutely sure you would command my respect. If I have been lukewarm, indifferent, careless of my advantages (I suppose you must refer to Mrs. Warrington's lawsuit), you will at least concede that I never jeopardized her interests. She has won her case; — we got the exact decision we wanted. She had told me herself that she preferred that the Gordons should have some slight concessions. It was done absolutely according to her wish. They have fifty thousand dollars. They have accepted it. The suit is now closed: they can never disturb her title again. Even Marston, who is an inveterate fault-finder, can see nothing to grumble at. I have not yet seen Mrs. Warrington since the decision. I have been in no state of mind to seek her; but I had a cordial note from her, in which she expressed absolute satisfaction with the whole arrangement and working of the case. I am not proud of my success. I like to win; but the least defeat makes me a million times more wretched than any victory can make me joyful."

"I know, I know," answered Alan hurriedly. "All the world knows that you have conducted this case admirably."

"Let us dismiss that subject," said Truax. "I came

to see you about a very different matter. As I began by saying, I have unlimited faith in you. I like your way of looking at things. You see things fairly. I want you to help me."

Alan had remained standing for some time, and now came up to his visitor, and put his hand on his shoulder. Truax raised his eyes, and fastened them on the doctor's face, looking at him long and fixedly.

"Don't say any thing about my deserts," said Alan. "Tell me what you want to tell me, and I will serve you according to the best of my ability. You don't look well, Truax; you don't, indeed. I am your friend, unworthy though I may be; I am your admirer; I am your cordial well-wisher; I am, too, your physician. I should like to help you."

Truax went on regarding him with a kindled, dilated, troubled glance. He seemed to be making an immense effort to speak, but had no strength to syllable his words. He kept a long silence, then remarked, —

"Doctor, you were not over and above pleased when I became engaged to Mrs. Warrington."

"Well, no. Under the circumstances you could hardly expect that I should be."

"You believed that she had made a mistake in accepting me."

Alan bit his lip.

"I wanted to marry her myself," said he. "This may seem a humiliating confession, but I am afraid it explains my course of conduct."

Truax took the confession quietly: it contained no novelty for him

"Nevertheless, you expected, I dare say, that, as men go, I should be fairly honest."

"A little prospect of bad behavior on your part would have been rather agreeable to my uneasy imagination."

Alan's tone was light, but the mood of Truax grew heavier and heavier.

"Ford," he broke forth, "I'm discouraged, and out of heart."

"I'm listening to you."

"Do you guess the reason?"

"Don't keep me in suspense."

"I've had a horrible struggle, horrible. I've been at war with myself. I've — Don't imagine it was a temptation: there was no tempter; the danger was in my own nature. The trouble was not a new one: it assailed me weeks, months ago. I put it down for a time; but, while I congratulated myself on my success in overcoming it, it came back with seven devils, each worse than the one I had just got rid of."

"Don't talk figuratively," said Alan, who had been growing all the time more his usual composed self. "Insensibly you exaggerate every thing."

"I couldn't exaggerate what I have felt," responded Truax in a dull voice, and passing his hand over his forehead.

"Do you mean to say that this dilemma, this trouble of yours, has concerned a woman?"

"Yes. That is what I mean to say."

"And a different woman from Mrs. Warrington?"

"A very different woman."

"What are you going to do about it?"

"I don't in the least know."

"I suppose you are at least aware what woman you love, and mean to be faithful to?"

Truax looked up, and smiled grimly.

"'Tis not optional with me," said he.

"You mean" — Alan was conscious of a returning excitement which he could not restrain. "You mean that you are bound in honor — that Mrs. Warrington commands your allegiance, and that" —

"I don't know in the least what I mean."

Alan looked at Truax intently. His face showed the wear and tear of strong emotion.

"You were going to ask my advice about something," said he. "It is only necessary to look at you to see that you are in some deep trouble. I suppose you want to end it."

"End it? Well, yes. Things don't last, they say. What I want to know is this," said Truax almost fiercely: "shall I — ought I to go to Mrs. Warrington and tell her every thing, or hide the matter in my own heart, and go on as we have been going on?"

Alan's heart, which had been beating violently with hope, suddenly checked itself with a kind of dread.

"You are not then committed to anybody else?" he asked.

"Committed? What I mean is this. Ought I to go to Katharine and say, 'I have been in love with another woman: I am still in love with another woman. There is no strength or faith in me, save for

her. Under these circumstances will you take me, or reject me?"

"That would be tolerably brutal."

"Of course it would; but, at all events, it would be honest."

"Of course she would tell you — any woman would — to go and find your happiness elsewhere."

"But there is no happiness for me elsewhere."

"Nonsense. If you love another woman, the moment you were free you could marry her."

"She won't have me."

"Have you asked her?"

"Yes."

Alan experienced a crushing sense that this trouble between Truax and Katharine would turn out a mere bubble, which a warm breath would blow away. Katharine had been of late dissatisfied with her *fiancé*, and disposed to question, with some close logic, the worth of her hopes of happiness; but, with his state of mind once made clear, would she not feel an ardent revulsion of love?

"What's the matter?" asked Truax, who saw something of Ford's misery in his face.

"I mean to be honest, I try to be honest," the latter returned with a tremor in his voice which moved Truax. He stretched out, and took his hand, and pressed it with a powerful kindness and sympathy. "It is difficult," the doctor added with a half-smile, "for a man to be wholly disinterested. My heart, my motives, are mixed. If you lost Katharine, it would be my salvation."

Truax stared at him with a quickened glance.

"Why, Ford!" he exclaimed, "we ought to feel some sympathy for each other. Our situations are not unlike. We each love a woman whom destiny has appropriated to somebody else."

"There is at least this difference," retorted Alan with some dryness: "I am engaged to no woman. The alternative in my case is not marriage with a woman any man ought to be willing to die to win, but misery, loneliness, despair."

"I see," said Truax: "I spoke egotistically, and like an ass."

"Suppose you tell me candidly how you stand. You have offered me your confidence, the situation seems to me unique; but it was not wholly of my seeking, and you almost owe it to me now to be absolutely frank. You have stimulated my curiosity. Besides, I am Katharine's nearest friend,—almost her only guardian. I feel it my right to understand the case fully. I can't help guessing to whom you refer."

Truax got up, and began walking about the room.

"It's Miss Gordon," said he.

"So I supposed."

"I meant to tell you," said Truax: "I wanted to tell you exactly what had happened. Something she said to me last week—that night at the picture-gallery—worked on my feelings. I determined to see her. I had hardly ever seen her alone. Well, I had a chance. Let me see, when was it? The night of the dinner at Delmonico's. Tuesday? Yes, Tuesday, the last day but one the case was on. I went

to the dinner and to the reception, and afterwards' — He turned, and looked at Alan, and gave a discordant laugh. "'Tis not so easy," he added in a harsh voice: "I don't know how to tell such things."

"You went to see this young girl?"

"Yes, I went to see her."

"Well, what happened?"

"Difficult to define what happened."

"You came to a definite understanding?"

"I gained a definite notion of her state of mind, at all events."

"She loves you, then?"

Truax snapped his fingers.

"Not so much as that," said he.

"Impossible!"

"So I thought. I was sure she loved me. I did not believe it at first: I fancied she wanted to baffle my insight, to keep her secret. Next day I had a note which made it all clear."

"At all events, you declared your own feelings for her?"

"What could she know about feelings like mine? she is too young. I had no right to torment her."

"She is a mere child," said Alan kindly. "From the moment a girl becomes a woman in stature, we invest her with womanhood: of course it is a mistake. Nothing is so crude, so heartless, as a young girl."

Truax looked at him eagerly.

"I know little about women," he said in a deep voice. "Perhaps you are right. I can't get a clear impression of her yet. There are too many warring

elements in my heart ; but I don't think she's heartless. She has imagination, she has ideals. I don't happen to conform to them. She insists that a man should be honorable" —

" *Honorable ?* "

" Yes, *honorable*. That's where I fail to her mind, in a nice sense of honor. It is something, I tell you, Ford, to be preached at by the blush-rose you long to pick from the bush. I have had an experience. I am the wiser for it, if not the better. As I said, the day after I had seen her she wrote me a long letter. It was a homily. She seems to know all the phrase-books of virtue by heart. Dear little girl ! By Heaven ! had she been near me when I read it she might have thought me insane ; for I laughed, — laughed as if it had been a vain and bitter jest. She has as much idea of me as if she were seven instead of seventeen."

" She gave you good advice ? "

" Excellent."

" I can imagine what it was."

" Oh, yes ! Marriage is a simple matter to her perceptions. All that is necessary is, to make up your mind that your course is right ; then keep to it unswervingly. And to be right, all that is necessary is, that you should have given your promise. Nothing could be easier."

" You don't find it so easy ? "

Truax did not reply. He was still walking about. His feelings, which had hitherto been controlled, now began to control him.

"She is going to marry," said he in a broken voice.

"Did she tell you so?"

"No; but it is plain to me that that intention was the root of all her actions, and all her views concerning me."

"George Decker is the man, no doubt."

"Yes." He was silent for a moment. "I should never have supposed," he went on, "that life could have offered me so much of what had before been not only unconceived, but inconceivable. What puzzles me is" —

He was so long about finishing his sentence, that Alan asked, —

"What is it puzzles you?"

"I wonder what is ahead of me." He looked at Ford with a sort of perplexity. "It seems to me incredible," said he, "that I am to recover easily from this state of feeling."

Alan said nothing.

"What do you advise me to do?"

"Advice in such a matter is difficult, and particularly for a man in my position, to give."

"I am certain of one thing, that life on its present terms is not worth keeping. I believe it is, however, the result of every one's experience, that the impressions of the human mind constantly change and shift."

"Like a kaleidoscope? Well, that is a lucky accident for men who have such minds."

"It seems strange and unnatural to me to think of going to Katharine" —

Alan's face stiffened.

"I hurt you: I am insensible to your feelings," cried Truax, suddenly moved to sympathy. "I am a cold-blooded egotist. But I can think of but one thing. Until lately these subjects have had no reality to me, — none. I'll tell you what it is like. One night I went with Doris to a concert: they played something of Mozart's, I believe. Between the fuller harmonies came in every now and then the note of a flute persistently repeating a single tender little strain. It seemed a secret, torn out of the very heart of one's heart, and told in music: it brought freshness and rapture to cheat a man out of all the whirl, fatigue, and dulness of every-day life. It came again and again, until heart and ear pined for it; and each time it recurred she looked up at me and smiled. The thought of her has come to me in that way ever since."

Alan had listened seriously.

"I should say, Truax," he observed with an effort which lent his words a curious effect of deliberation, "that you ought to tell Katharine all this. It is your duty, or so, at least, it appears to me."

"It seems to me unmanly, ungenerous; that is — if — if she loves me."

"You feel as if you ought to set to work to conquer your feeling."

Truax knew very well that his impulse to confess all to Katharine came, not from a pressure of longing towards the fulfilment of his duty to her, but rather from an infinite homesickness for that land of promise whose shores he had seen in the distance, but never reached.

"I should like," said he, "to behave with a sort of ideal perfection in the present emergency. I may be weak, but in my weakness I should like to feel there was some strength."

"I am sorry I can't help you. You see very well that I am incompetent to advise. This is no trivial affair."

"I sha'n't go to Katharine to-night," said Truax. "I shall go home, dine, and go to bed. I am worn out."

"Perhaps you will go to-morrow."

"To-morrow I have to go out of town."

"When do you return?"

"The following evening. I am engaged at Albany."

"But some day, when the time comes," said Alan, "and when you gain resolution, you will go to her. Meanwhile what is she to do? You are leaving her alone at a critical moment. You cannot play a secondary or a passive part, after all that has gone on between you. It is not alone your happiness, your life, that is concerned, but another's, of whom you ought to think first. She has given up every thing for you" —

"I know — I know — I know," groaned Truax. "I feel it all as strongly as you do. But give me a few days to gain a clear glimpse of what I ought to tell her."

Nothing more occurred to Alan in the way of warning or advice; and after a few remarks about the conclusion of the lawsuit, the two men parted amicably enough.

KATHARINE AND DORIS.

ALAN was right in telling Truax that he was leaving Katharine alone at a critical moment. She was no longer young enough to find substantial diet in illusion. She had encountered Truax at a time when she felt a profound discouragement and disbelief in any possible happiness for herself, and he had given her fresh and vivid impressions. Still, although she had expended much fervor of imagination upon her ideals, it was impossible to live altogether in fantasy, and accept rainbow-tinted pictures, no matter how charming in conception, as realities. Experience had, to a degree, seasoned her powers: she asked a good deal of destiny, and was in no respect used to accepting small favors. Hence, when her first happiness became shadowed by a doubt, she discovered faults and inconsistencies in Truax, and began, too, to be haunted by the humiliating thought that the scantiness of his passion for herself was no measure of his possible feelings. She might have forgiven him for being cold, but not for being cold to her when another could fire him into actual ardor.

There could be little doubt of his having appeared at disadvantage in contrast to Alan Ford the evening that Alan had ventured to declare himself her lover. Katharine had hardly met Truax since. Alan, she had

seen every day. She had a horror of being condemned to loneliness, and Truax left her bitterly lonely. Her feelings of annoyance with him could hardly fail to increase with every day of his absence. Besides, her vanity was wounded. Alan Ford knew how slightly she was regarded, with what ease her fetters were worn, so she told herself; and, her pride kindling with this thought, she resented the conduct of Truax more and more.

She was sitting alone the same afternoon that the interview in the preceding chapter occurred, occupied with these persistent thoughts, which recurred with a kind of raging obstinacy the moment she was unemployed, when the servant brought her a card.

She glanced at it indifferently, then flushed, and bit her lip.

"The ladies are in the the reception-room?" she asked.

"There is only one lady, — a young lady," the man replied.

Katharine looked at the card again: it bore the address of *Mrs. James Lyon*, and underneath was engraved *Miss Gordon*.

"A young lady," she repeated.

"Quite a young lady."

"Ask her to come up here," said Katharine dully.

She was sitting in a little room adjoining her bed-chamber, fitted up with bright chintzes, all the chairs so deeply cushioned that one could not sit down except in an attitude of luxurious repose. There was no sign of occupation about her, — not a book, nor a

basket, nor even a writing-desk. Katharine had spent many an hour here, mechanically passing her rings to and fro on her fingers, staring into the fire, or leaning back utterly motionless, her eyes half-closed. When her new bliss was yet blissful, this had been the place where her pleasantest dreams had come. Lately, in her troubled, fitfully-illuminated state of mind, she had found herself most comfortable here.

She had not moved from her position, but sat gazing abstractedly towards the door, which had closed on the retreating servant, when it opened again, and Doris Gordon was ushered in.

The young girl looked exquisitely pretty: the crisp winter air she had met out of doors had lighted up her complexion into its most dazzling tints. She was so fresh, so rosy, so young, that Katharine felt herself grow dull, and wither in contrast. Not even Truax, who for many an hour had sat by Doris, meeting her laughing, candid gaze, watching the perpetual play and movement of the delicate features, clearly cut as a Roman cameo, studying the charm and mystery of the whole maidenly aspect and personality, had ever felt her beauty as this mature woman felt it to-day.

"Miss Gordon," she said, half rising, "I am very glad to see you. Thomas said that you were alone, so I ventured to ask you to come up here."

"It was very good in you," Doris returned, advancing promptly, and clasping the extended hand in both hers. "I have no card of my own. Yes, I came all alone. My aunt is not with me. I wanted to see you by yourself."

At her advance Katharine had settled back again among her cushions, and now looked at her indolently and half dreamily.

"I am glad to see you," she remarked again. "Pray sit down; that crimson chair just behind you is very comfortable."

Doris took the chair, without, however, yielding to the influence of its softness and depth. Contrasted with Katharine's attitude of luxurious repose, she looked braced, alert, eager.

"I am going home," she said at once. "I am going away from New York. I have come to bid you good-by, Mrs. Warrington."

"Indeed!"

"It seems very sudden, now that I have made up my mind; yet I have been here for months. I came in November, the very first of November; and now it is February."

"I suppose," remarked Katharine, her cool, deliberate tone seeming to correct the sort of excitement which not only showed in the young girl's manner, but thrilled through her voice, — "I suppose that it will not be very long before you return."

"It will be a long, long time!" cried Doris with a powerful flash of the eyes. "I may never come back. Why should I? Grandpa and aunt Dora have nobody else, — nobody. They need me."

"And does no one need you here?" Katharine inquired coolly

"No!" exclaimed Doris almost sharply. "No one needs me here."

"I had understood," said Katharine blandly, "that you were engaged to be married."

"I am not," returned Doris succinctly.

"You have been engaged, I think. I have understood it as an accepted and unquestioned fact that you were to marry Mr. George Decker."

"Oh, no!" syllabled Doris slowly and crushingly. "That was never so. Never for a day, never for an hour, has it seemed possible to me that I could ever marry Mr. George Decker."

Katharine experienced a curious sense of defeat: it was as if some action of her own had depended upon this confession, and, now that it had come, she was of necessity impelled towards an irresistible decision from which she had hitherto shrunk.

"Perhaps I ought to say," Doris went on after a moment's pause, her voice dropping a little from its clear, high key, "that there have been times when I hoped and half-expected that some time, by and by, a long while off, I might get over my reluctance to such a marriage. It even seemed to me that I did wrong to refuse a future which promised me so many advantages, which would put means at my disposal to help those nearest and dearest to me."

"Such a feeling was very natural in a young girl," said Katharine. "I had it once: I let myself be governed by it."

Doris looked at her with quickened interest.

"And did you—did you regret it?" she asked eagerly, then cried, "Oh, forgive me: Of course I had no right to ask, — none. Sometimes I have wished,

have even longed, for the counsel of a woman who had experienced something of what has been forced on me."

"Did you come to me for advice?"

"No: I made up my mind all alone," said Doris solemnly, fixing a large, luminous gaze upon Katharine. "All at once I saw every thing clear. I no longer had any doubts. There may be many half-truths: there can be only one actual, vital truth. It would be impossible for me to marry a man I did not love."

Katharine encountered her unconscious, wistful gaze with outward calmness; but inwardly she felt a growing terror. What ordeal was this foolish young girl preparing for her, prefacing it with these everyday commonplaces, from which she seemed to have derived powerful inspiration?

"It is not impossible for a woman to marry a man whom she does not love," she replied with a sort of irritation. "It is no more impossible than any error, any sin. Like other errors and other sins, it carries its own punishment with it."

"A girl might do it unknowing," cried Doris pierced by insight, and feeling keenly the possibility of a lifelong mistake, self-imposed almost unconsciously; "but not if she had ever" — She broke off, growing scarlet.

"You speak as if you had been really in love," said Katharine on the instant.

"I am very foolish to talk of these things at all." Doris answered in quite a different manner. "I know very little about them. I came for entirely another

purpose than to discuss my own foolish views. I told you, Mrs. Warrington, that I came to bid you good by."

"Yes." Their glances met.

"I am going home almost happy: I shall soon be quite happy. It will be so much to us all to have a little more money. We may live easily and pleasantly now. We used to be poor, — poorer than you can guess. I want to thank you. I want to thank you with all my heart."

"Thank me for the money?"

"Yes, Mrs. Warrington."

Katharine looked at her, musing a little. She had felt a vague threat in the very presence of the young girl, something inimical to her poor, shadowy happiness. She was ready to suspect that some meaning lay behind these words.

"You ought, instead, to thank Mr. Truax," she said suavely. "I have heard him accused of managing the case for you better than your own lawyers could have done."

"Mrs. Warrington!"

"I don't complain, my dear Miss Gordon. On the contrary, the decision seems to me absolutely just and fair. In fact, I have said from the first, that I preferred a compromise to a lawsuit. This has ended much the same. It is a compromise."

Doris blushed, and bent down her head. She tried to speak, but could only stammer a few words. Before she had contrived to utter a complete sentence, her voice utterly died away. The same impression which

had made Katharine feel something hostile in the meeting came over her: she began to suspect that Mrs. Warrington was her enemy. It needed only this consciousness, however, to renew her powers. She lifted her eyes, and regarded the older woman candidly.

"I cannot think," she said softly, "that Mr. Truax would have done any thing with which you could find fault. Mr. Decker tells me, that whatever concessions he made were the result of nice calculations. We could not have accepted an entire reverse: we should have appealed to another court. This was a bribe to our faint-heartedness. Grandpa is so very old, it seemed better not to wear him out with hope deferred."

"At any rate, you should thank Mr. Truax, and not me."

"I will not sit here," cried Doris, suddenly kindling, "listening to such remarks and not protesting against them. I see, now, that I made a mistake in coming. It was a sudden impulse and a foolish one. I felt that you were strong and we were weak; and that, had you but put out half your strength, you could have crushed us. As I said before, I was grateful. I wanted to thank you,—I do thank you, Mrs. Warrington,—I thank you with all my heart. I will not weary you longer. I will go away."

The young girl had risen. Now that she had lost the quick sympathetic motive which had swept her along, moulding her ideas to her impulses, she felt mortified at herself and angry at Mrs. Warrington. She confronted her indomitably.

“Good-by,” she said.

“Do not go,” returned Katharine hastily. She put out her hand to Doris, and detained her. “I ought to be grateful to you,” she went on, “for defending Mr. Truax to me. Do not misunderstand me. Be patient a little. Let us talk this out. As I said before, you should express gratitude — if gratitude you feel — to him, and not to me.”

“I never expect to see him any more,” Doris replied, still with a haughty crest.

“Shall I tell him that you thank him?”

Doris hesitated. “Yes,” she said finally, with reluctance.

“You used to be great friends. Are you no longer friends?”

Katharine still held her hand, and Doris began to throb and pulsate like a detained bird. She was flushed with excitement. But the older woman was pale as death. She tightened her clutch, and looked tremulously into the bright, youthful face. She was tormented by an ardent desire to know every thing, not to be longer mocked by half-visions. She resolved to be no more the victim of her imagination. Her state of mind cleared ; and, full of despair although she felt, she saw her way distinctly. If, instead of her being separated from Doris by all the complexities of their opposing destinies, they could but be drawn together by a vital sympathy, and each help the other to answer the perplexing problems which had arisen ! It was, however, difficult for her to frame a sentence which even suggested her meaning.

"Let me go, Mrs. Warrington," cried Doris, who felt something strange and menacing in Katharine's look and attitude. "Please let me go. Mr Truax and I are friends, oh, yes! if that is the question you want me to answer." She laughed a little. "We are very good friends," she said again.

"No more than friends? Has he never made love to you?"

Doris flushed, then grew pale, then, without answering, averted her silent eyes.

"My question seems to you cruel, cowardly," cried Katharine, suddenly feeling conscience-stricken for what she had said; "but you don't realize my need in asking it. Something has troubled me of late. I do not want to make another mistake. To be young and foolish is bad enough; but to be old and not to have learned wisdom,—that is terrible. If—if—if Mr. Truax loved you, Miss Gordon, I would rather—I would rather, I say"—She was forced to break off. Tears were streaming down her face. "Try to understand me," she faltered between hurrying sobs. "I have not expressed what I mean. Answer my thought. It is easy for me to believe that he loves you. You are so young, so untried. All the pages of your heart are fair and unspoiled. He may turn them every one, while I—I have lived through so much."

Doris had listened with a look of increasing pain and terror. She remembered some fault in herself, and was horrified, now that she saw it in a clearer light. She felt herself inexpressibly unworthy compared with

this woman, who stood, to her imagination, immeasurably higher than her words.

"Tell me," said Katharine, again speaking in a voice but little above a whisper, — tell me " —

Doris tore away her hand, and darted across the room. Her face was scorched with blushes: she could not endure even a suggestion of this terrible question which overwhelmed her with shame. After this frantic movement for escape she paused, and regarded Katharine with a wild, frightened look, doubtful whether to leave the room without a word. Her impulse was to run away.

"This is a fearful thing you have said to me, Mrs. Warrington," she finally managed to utter. "I wish you had not said it, — I wish I had not come here to-day."

Katharine shook her head.

"You are shy as a fawn," said she. "Come back here. Why are you afraid of me? Let us be friends. You do not appreciate what I would do for you. Come to me, I say."

Like a reluctant, yet obedient child Doris crossed the room once more, and approached her. Katharine took her hand, and gently ungloved it. It was a pretty hand, not so perfect as Katharine's own, but more supple, and with more vitality in it.

"If," said Katharine, "if I were not in the way, I believe that John Truax would be holding this hand to-day, and claiming it as his own."

She looked up at Doris with a sad and questioning glance.

The young girl had thrilled from head to foot with something she thought was anger. The elder woman, looking at her burning cheeks and brilliant eyes, read her secret far otherwise.

"He cannot — he shall not — he shall never touch it!" cried Doris firmly. Her eyebrows were knitted, her large eyes gleamed, her lips were tightly drawn together. "He belongs to you, Mrs. Warrington," she went on, more and more agitated. "Nothing could ever be different. He must love you. He ought to love — he shall love you. — Anyway," she declared with a sort of frantic decision, "he shall be faithful to you."

She again snatched her hand away, and, with a movement as if bewildered and half-blinded, ran out of the room, leaving her glove in Katharine's hand.

"PLAYING AT LOVE WITH HALF A LOVER."

TRUAX went to Albany, spent three days, then, after concluding his business, returned to New York. He experienced a feeling, on entering his office there, of having been absent for an indefinite period. There was something of strangeness about the familiar objects: even the neatly docketed papers on his desk seemed different; the backs of his books stirred only remote associations.

"I wonder what it is," he mused aloud to Jasper, staring about him. "I feel as if I had been away a year."

"The woman washed the windows, and cleared away the cob-webs," said Jasper with easy solution of the enigma.

"That's it, no doubt," ejaculated Truax, and set to work at once, wasting no more thought on the matter. He was conscious of a new zest in taking up his old occupations. For a long time he had been harassed, disquieted, dejected. Baleful tricks of imagination had forced him to confront all sorts of disturbing ideas. By turns he had been the prey of illusions, sometimes sweet, even intoxicating, again bitter, — ay, bitter as gall. Now truth and soberness had once more returned, and he saw himself and his affairs by the clear light of day. He thanked Heaven devoutly that the

case, Gordon *vs.* Warrington, etc., was over; and, finding a bundle of papers on that subject cumbering his desk, he threw it after Jasper, who was leaving the room, and requested him never to let him see the name again.

No more coquetting with temptation! No more futile dalliance with idle fancies! He repulsed grimly every suggestion of what had before been most alluring. He did not exactly frame to his own mind a wish that he had never met Doris Gordon: even with all the pangs of his thwarted passion, still baffled, still unsatisfied, he seemed to realize that his sufferings had given him his first actual knowledge of life. He was humanized by his defeat; he understood his own nature and his own powers better than before; he felt the necessity of a consoler, and reflected that there was an ample tenderness in Katharine Warrington. Now that the glamour that little witch had cast over him was dispelled, Truax was quite ready to return to his old allegiance. After his fever of passion, he looked forward to the still waters of legitimate love-making with real pleasure.

Therefore, with the cobwebs swept down, and the light shining in, he went to work. Some ten days or more had passed since he had seen Katharine; and his intention was to get through his papers as soon as possible, and, a little after mid-day, to go to her house and spend the afternoon and evening. He had determined to make a clean breast of all his faults and follies, then to prove his experience to be not unsweetened by profit, since his character could never

have stood out clearly without the record of this temptation and victory. With every hour of his morning planned out, he was impatient of interruptions, and felt some resentment, when, towards twelve o'clock, Mr. Marston was announced, and he was forced to admit him.

"I am horribly busy," said Truax rather ungraciously. "There's not another man in New York I would have stopped for, Marston."

Mr. Marston took the implied compliment calmly.

"You can't be any busier than I am," he replied. "I just stepped over to consult you a moment. I was here yesterday, but they told me you were out of town."

He proceeded to his business. He was not satisfied with the result of the lawsuit. The adjudication was unjust and monstrous; the management of the case had been faulty; the blundering alone systematic and comprehensive: he summed up the treatment pointedly, drawing the moral of his own infallibility and superiority to others with admirable clearness. Truax listened blandly, apparently indifferent, when he heard his methods defined as loose-jointed, his wit as foolish, and his knowledge of law and equity as superficial. The old man went on to declare that Mrs. Warrington was ruined; that the withdrawal of this frightful amount of ready money at the present moment, when no sum could be realized on any investments without a calamitous shrinkage of values, inspired him with the liveliest apprehensions of future disaster to the property.

"And now," pursued Mr. Marston, growing all the time more vehement, "to think of her new resolution!"

Truax had been leaning back against the green-morocco-covered cushions of his chair with his eyes half-shut. He now opened them. "What resolution?" he inquired.

"Of course you are better aware of that lady's plans than any other man can be," snarled the visitor.

"But to what do you allude?"

"Dr. Ford came to see me about it yesterday. He took it coolly."

The old gentleman watched Truax shrewdly, seeing certain ideas which had been mere suspicions take shape and gather strength before his eyes. He began to believe that he had it in his power to launch a thunderbolt.

"Dr. Ford came to see you about what?" demanded Truax.

"About Mrs. Warrington's closing her house, and going to Europe."

"Nonsense," said Truax sharply. "She does not dream of such a thing."

"I refer you to my informant," said Mr. Marston testily, rising as he spoke. "As Mrs. Warrington's leading counsel and future husband, I took it for granted that you were in her confidence."

Truax was too much discomposed to ask another question, and allowed his visitor to take leave without a word of further explanation. His morning was spoiled: it was impossible for him to return to his

work. Mr. Marston's piece of news seemed to him simply incredible. It was not worth while to give it serious attention until it was confirmed by Katharine herself. He set out at once to see her. It was only an hour past noon when he reached her house ; and, to his chagrin, he found that she had gone out shopping, and had not yet returned. She was expected home to luncheon, the man went on to say ; and Truax entered, and sat down to wait.

He began to feel deeply injured. He had been ushered into the library, and, seating himself in an arm-chair by the fire, became lost in thought. Never did man remember more vividly all the extenuating circumstances in his own case. It seemed perfectly natural to him that a woman should forget the faults of the man she loves. A little yielding to temptation, a haze of human infirmity, rounds off the sharpness of perfection, and lends a charm to character.

It was while he was engaged in these reflections that Mrs. Warrington came in, on her return from her shopping.

"Why, Mr. Truax, are you here?" she cried. "I did not know that you had come back from Albany."

He met her rather impetuously, intending to kiss her ; but, without any apparent effort on her part, she eluded his embrace, and stood opposite on the hearth-rug, smiling and serene. She was dressed in an out-of-doors garment of velvet and fur, and looked very handsome.

"I should have come last night," said he, "but I did not get in until nine o'clock. I was very anxious to see you."

"I was out last evening until very late," Katharine returned. "Accordingly it would have been useless for you to come."

There was an ease in her manner which had the effect of composing Truax. So proud and assured a bearing commanded his admiration; but it taught him at the same time that a woman capable of assuming an attitude so queenly might find something unsatisfactory in any thing less than the most abject homage.

"I heard this morning," he exclaimed, going bluntly at the chief matter in his thoughts, "that you had it in your mind to go to Europe."

She smiled.

"You know that is a resource of mine," said she with some archness. "Sit down and wait while I go and dress for lunch. I cannot wear these furs in the house. I will soon come back." She left the room pulling off her gloves, and he watched her walk along the hall and ascend the stairs. She did not once look back. He again sat down, as she had requested, and once more became absorbed in thought, feeling now both irritated and perplexed.

Before he had arrived at any definite conclusion, she had returned. She had put on one of the white dresses for which he had once expressed a fondness, and came in with her two children clinging to her skirts.

"Let us have lunch at once," she said in the same pleasant, easy way in which she had first addressed him. "My aunt is already in the dining-room."

Truax followed her out. He was not certain to which corner the wind had shifted ; but he found it propitious, and was able to talk about all sorts of things without meeting any sharp contradictions. Never had he admired Katharine so much : an exquisite calmness and sweetness pervaded her whole presence. The children felt it as well as he, and hung about her with delight, pressing their lips to her hands and her dress with a sort of ecstasy. No allusion was made to her proposed trip to Europe throughout the meal, and Truax was no longer impatient to ask questions. Katharine spoke and acted with a new decision, as if her destiny was appointed, and there was nothing any longer either vague or fluctuating about her ideas or hopes. Mrs. Eliot looked at them both with an anxious air, watching them as if her mind was disturbed, and she knew not what to think. When she occasionally opened her lips to utter a syllable, she assumed a Delphic air, and took pains to have her oracular remarks vague enough to mean any thing. Once or twice Truax asked her some trifling question ; and she would reply that one could never tell, that the future alone could determine, and so forth.

When luncheon was finally over, Truax determined to end his uncertainties.

"Send the children away, Kate," said he. "Come into the library, and shut the door."

He led her away at once, and followed his own directions, to the letter. "Now tell me," said he, the moment they were alone, "what all this talk about Europe means?"

"I had not intended," returned Katharine, "that you should hear the news from any one but myself. I told Alan I wanted to see you the moment you returned to town. He was to look you up to-day."

"Are you actually going to Europe?"

"Yes."

Truax felt his head swim around.

"It seems a precipitate decision, and under the circumstances" — He stopped short, and bit his lip.

"Under the circumstances?" she repeated, looking at him questioningly.

"Under the circumstances such a plan wrongs me, does it not?"

"Such a plan seems better, — better for us both," answered Katharine. "Believe me, John, I want to help you." She gazed at him kindly.

"To help me? How?"

"I want to help you to be happy."

"I don't understand you. How can we be married in June if you set out for Europe now?"

"We are not going to be married," returned Katharine. She seemed quite at her ease, and answered his penetrating look with one half-pensive and half-absent. "That was what I wanted to tell you. I would not write, as the news might have seemed too sudden without a word of explanation."

Truax tried to speak, but his lips had stiffened: they felt frozen. He could not utter a syllable.

"Hence, feeling myself free, I had nobody to consult about my plans, so decided at once. Aunt is going with me, and we shall take the children."

"How long is it since you made up your mind?" asked Truax in a faint voice.

"Not long. Counting by days, a very short time."

"And you mean to — to give me up?"

"I mean not to accept sacrifices from you. You are generous, but over-generosity should be nipped in the bud."

"You allude to our marriage? You pretend that" —

"I don't pretend any thing. You do not love me, you never loved me; and love is, or ought to be, the basis of marriage."

Truax began to stride about.

"You don't believe in me," said he hurriedly. "You don't know what I have felt to-day. Could you read my heart, you would have faith in my sincerity. I did not know how precious you were to me, until — Can't you forgive me for having wavered, for having ever turned aside from my allegiance? Don't you see that I have repented?"

"I don't want you to repent," said Katharine.

"I don't like repentance, I don't like humility," cried Truax. "But I came back from Albany, determined to feel both, and act on them. I had a thousand things to say to you. I was ready to tell you every thing that had been in my heart, to beg you to forgive me, to promise amendment for the future. But it was all put out of my head by Marston's information that you were going abroad. Now that I am here, I can't think of a syllable. I feel angry, hurt, mortified. My conduct may have given you a grievance; but, good God! it can't be compared with yours.

You are treating me cruelly: you are acting on an impulse of infernal pride and haughtiness." He went up to her, and looked anxiously into her face. "Believe in me, believe in me," he exclaimed, stretching out his hands to her, not daring to clasp hers until permitted. "What would you have me do, what **can** I do, to convince you of my sincerity?"

"I don't call you insincere. When you asked me to marry you, you knew nothing of your own feelings: in fact, you" —

"You have prejudged me," said Truax. "You don't act on the first principles of justice. You have condemned me without a hearing: you have made up your mind to dismiss me unheard, — to punish me, whether innocent or guilty."

"Wait a moment," said Katharine. She put her hand on his arm, and looked up into his face. "Will you answer me three questions truly?" she asked.

"A hundred."

"Were you entirely happy after I consented to marry you?"

"Entirely happy?" echoed Truax dubiously. "Now that," he continued in a tone of expostulation, "is an unfair question. It belongs to a woman's world of unreasonableness and illusion. She reads in novels that men are ecstatically happy the moment a woman consents, when, good heavens!" —

Katharine laughed a little. "We will pass that question," said she. "Now for the second. Did you tell Doris Gordon that you were engaged to me?"

"I told Mrs. Lyon in her presence."

Katharine shook her head.

"Did you ever — did you ever" — She was, however, powerless to finish her question. Her voice shook, and tears rushed to her eyes.

At these signs of weakness Truax grew stronger. He seized her hands in his, and lifted them to his lips, kissing softly the palm of each.

"I did," said he with resolution. "I shall make no attempt to deceive you. I don't think I ever ceased to love you; but — a powerful feeling seized me, — a feeling which governed me for the time being with a giant's strength. If you were going to ask if I made love to her, I am forced to confess that I was impelled to" —

She interrupted him. She had grown calm.

"I did not ask for any other reason than to have you confirm what I already fully believed," said she. "You have loved, and still love, another woman; and there is only one course for me to take, and that is, to leave you free."

"And you will not believe in my promises?"

"Besides," said Katharine, her hand still on his sleeve, and her eyes fixed on his face, "there is the question of my own happiness. You have an instinctive and irresistible aversion to domestic life, and I care for nothing else."

"I can be domestic: I will be domestic," put in Truax.

"I sometimes think," she went on, as if he had not interrupted her, "that — looking dispassionately at every thing, not deciding lightly, but examining all

sides, and then choosing the best course — I should do wrong not to marry a man who has been faithful to me for years."

Truax uttered an exclamation.

"Who knows me through and through, and loves my faults as well as my virtues; who is already like a father to my children."

"You mean Ford!" almost shouted Truax.

"Yes, I mean Alan Ford."

He stared at her, making an effort to realize his position. "Ford," he repeated, as if puzzled; "Ford! Ford! Of course," he added, "I knew he was in love with you. But" —

He was about to say that he had never dreamed of her caring any thing about this amiable doctor.

"I told him once that he was more worthy of you than I could ever be," he added aloud. "He is an utter contrast to me; still" — He gave a little bitter laugh. "I am not utterly a bad fellow," he went on. His voice had grown a little hoarse. "Am I to congratulate you?" he asked, taking her hand. "Are you actually engaged to him?"

"No, oh, no!" said Katharine.

"You waited, I suppose, to be off with the old love," Truax remarked lightly.

Somebody knocked at the door, and he went and opened it. He heard the servant murmur the name of some visitor, but did not wait to hear who it was. He wanted to get away: a sort of dull lethargy had taken possession of him.

"I will not trespass longer on your time now," he

said to Katharine. "To-morrow, perhaps, I will look in and hear the rest of your plans." He averted his eyes while he shook hands with her. He left the room, intending to leave the house unperceived, but in the hall ran upon Dr. Ford, who had just been shown in.

Neither spoke at first. Alan looked at Truax with a quivering anxiety to learn the result of his interview with Katharine. He had dared to hope nothing until they had met again. Truax gazed back at him with a curious indignation, mixed with wonder. Katharine was really going to marry this pleasant fellow: every thing seemed tottering and unsubstantial; he did not feel sure of the very ground he stood on.

"So you are going abroad, Ford?" said he. "*Bon voyage!*"

"Going abroad!" echoed Alan. "What do you mean?"

"*Bon voyage!*" said Truax again.

“BRIEF IS LIFE, BUT LOVE IS LONG.”

TRUAX had said to Katharine he should see her again, but he did not fulfil his promise. He nursed his grievance against her for a full month, telling himself she had not been generous, that she had yielded to petty scruples, when she might have trusted his honor and delicacy. He declared that his temporary aberration was over, that he had returned to his first allegiance. He was sentimental over his lost joys. He now felt it would have given him extreme pleasure to enter the domestic paradise, whose shining gates were closed in his face ; and since, in default of this, he was shut out from any private individual existence, he behaved with admirable consistency all through the spring, and was never seen out of his office, except in the court-room.

In May, Alan Ford came to see him, and invited him to make one of a half-dozen friends who were to witness a wedding ceremony prior to Mrs. Warrington's departure for Europe. Truax's indignation did not extend to the doctor, and he consented to be present. He expected to experience powerful tumults of feeling ; but, to his surprise, the moment he saw Katharine's hand in Alan's, his fury evaporated, leaving him bland and magnanimous. Mr. Marston gave the bride away with his most formal air ; but his gloom

could not eclipse the gayety of the occasion. He was very unhappy over the marriage, but was half-consolated by his thankfulness at being spared the misery of resigning Mrs. Warrington to Truax.

The latter, finding himself quite in the mood, accompanied the happy pair from the church to the steamer ; for they were to sail that very day, and looked forward to a six-months' honeymoon. Half the people in New York seemed to be outward bound that day ; and among them was Mrs. Lyon, with whom Truax had a lively chat during the half-hour of waiting.

When it was finally over, and he stood on the pier watching the ship steam down the bay, its smoke drifting away to the south, and long foaming furrows rolling in its wake, he was conscious of a feeling of reprieve. There had been nothing to reproach him in Katharine's beautiful placid face. She looked happy, as if at last she had given herself wholly and without reserve and forever. He felt he no longer needed to take his experience to heart : it was distasteful to him ; it left a painful trace upon his mind, and he acknowledged that it did him no credit. Nevertheless, mingled with absence of high self-esteem was a feeling of relief, of freedom, which in itself was sweet.

What was it his cousin had told him which gave him this throbbing consciousness of some joy to come? Simply that the Gordons had paid the Deckers a fee amounting to more than a third of their newly-gained money ; that George had given up his love-suit, and manfully accepted substantial compensations for his pains ; above all, that Doris, happy little

Doris, was to go out to Paris four months hence with her uncle, and spend the winter with Mrs. Lyon.

"Don't count too securely on that arrangement," Truax had said with easy audacity.

"Why, are you going to try to prevent it?"

He nodded. Sweet and painful remembrances had rushed over him like a flood. He could admit certain thoughts now without a stinging sense of treachery. How long it had been since he held in his that round, girlish hand, and looked down into a flushed, eloquent face! It fairly appalled him to reflect how dull he had been, how objectless his life had become. It seemed easily within his power to put a little excitement into his life. Why might he not go down and see Doris?

Some matters of business must be attended to before he left town; but, setting to work, he accomplished them in a space of time which amazed even himself. Something within made him feel urgent, driven, in haste: it was a chafing and irritating experience, even to postpone his journey twenty-four hours. The second night after he had bade good-by to Alan Ford and his bride he was on his way to the little seaport town. He had time for a few hours of rest, then early next morning set out for Gordon's Point. It was a warm day: in town it would have been insupportably warm; here the land and the sea breezes met, and frolicked in their play. The solitary stretches of the salt-meadows teemed with life: birds were whirring, darting, calling their young with tenderly urgent clamors. Truax gave himself up to his holiday, as if he had been a boy with all his future before him.

When he made the turn at the Neck, he remembered how, the autumn before, he had seen Doris coming towards him ; and, absurd although such an expectation was, he was disappointed not now to find her on the beach with Carlo beside her. His high spirits were a little dashed, and, for the remainder of his walk, some of his old disquietudes returned : he remembered how they had parted, and began to wonder, for the first time, how she had been holding him in her memory these four past months. When he reached the house he found Mr. Gordon sitting on the shady porch. The old man greeted him with his grandest air, which seemed to confer all social privileges. His daughter was just inside, and she came out with a cheerful welcome.

"I am so sorry Doris is not at home," she observed at once. "She set out only an hour ago."

"Set out?" echoed Truax in hopeless dismay, a sense of irrevocable loss taking possession of him. "Surely she has not gone far away?"

"No : she took Simon, and sailed away for a day's cruise."

As we have seen, it was not the habit of Truax to be fettered by fantastical restraints.

"Cannot I go and find her?" he asked eagerly.

"She had the ocean before her," replied Miss Dora Gordon, smiling ; "and she has the wind in her favor. You can have nothing but a skiff in which to follow."

"Let me have the skiff," said Truax.

Mr. Gordon interposed objections, Miss Dora suggested difficulties ; but Truax answered both with good

humored scorn. To have come so far, and then to sit tamely down and watch the minutes of this rare day go creeping past, was not in accordance with his present frame of mind. He hardly listened to advice: he took no heed of the perplexing and minute directions enforced, but left the house at once. The sun burned upon water and beach with intolerable splendor: the sea was almost hidden in opaline hazes, varied here and there with gleams of gold. Truax stood a moment on the rocks, shading his eyes with his hand, and searching the horizon for a sail. Not only the water was luminous with subtle blendings of gem-like hues, but the sky itself was lost in this throbbing color: one could hardly tell where it met the plain-like sea, except for faint flecks in the horizon, which hinted at sails. Which of these belonged to Doris's boat?

He strode over the ledge towards Simon's rocky pier, unfastened the rope from the ring, and drew up the skiff, which lay tossing, and jumped in. A pair of paddles lay on the bottom of the boat; and, adjusting them in the rowlocks, he struck out with bold, quick strokes, and was soon clear of the little harbor. As Miss Gordon had said, the ocean was before him.

“Across the dim, dim sea,
Where the melodious nightingale
Is singing in an orange dale,” —

That was where Truax wanted to be; but, in which direction he was to seek his bird in the solitude singing, he could not be certain. He pushed on, however, to the reefs where the curling waves were

breaking, and flinging up their spray. Once past the bar, it grew cooler; and the open water was a dark and opaque blue, with rims of the shining hues which played over it nearer the shore. Away at the north, Cape Ardent showed dimly; while, in the near south, Cape Violet became every moment bolder and clearer in outline.

Truax crossed his oars. Miss Dora Gordon had hinted at an ample provision for lunch and a possible picnic. He looked at his watch. It was now well past twelve o'clock; and probably somewhere within the circumference of these wide horizons Doris was at this very moment undoing her hamper. He had been rowing his hardest a full hour, and the momentary relief was pleasant. He decided to extend his recess to fifteen minutes; and perhaps in that interval some sign might appear, to point out the way. His skiff drifted, meeting the waves with little thrills and shudders. Here and there in the east the sail of a ship took the light, and long clouds of smoke followed the steamers.

He suddenly started, and grasped his oars. The shores of the promontory had loomed up gray and desolate a few moments before, with not a sign of life. Now all at once something flashed in the sunlight. He rowed frantically towards it. He almost shouted as he saw a little boat lying just at the rounding of the green cove, its sail lazily puffing and flapping.

"Starboard your helm!" he heard Simon cry with some irritation.

"Starboard it is," returned a young, bright voice.

Truax was almost alongside before he was perceived

Then Simon, his shoes and stockings off, his trousers rolled up to his shrunken knees, jumped into the water, and carefully guided the boat over a bed of shore rock, and tied it to an iron staple beyond high water mark.

"Come, Miss Do," said he, "the stones are not slippery to-day."

Doris had started up, and now looked down, apparently in doubt as to her proper course. "I don't know," she said in indecision, "whether I dare try it or not."

"Wait a minute," put in Truax. "Let me help you."

She turned, and looked across the intervening space with an indescribable glance, which puzzled him as to whether or not she was glad to see him.

"How do you do?" she said as quietly as if they had met at a party.

"I'm warm," returned Truax. "I'm tired. Besides, I'm hungry."

"So are we," Doris replied. "We were just going ashore for lunch."

Simon did not take matters so coolly. He stared, gasping, at his own boat and his own paddles, not connecting them with this stranger by any mental link of association.

"How are you, Simon?" said Truax. "I borrowed your boat. I never felt under such obligations to any man in my life as towards you, when I found your boat lying all ready for a start."

"I meant to have brought the oars with me, sir, by George! I did."

"Lucky you didn't. It will be worth ten dollars to you that I found those oars ready to hand."

To this view of the case Simon could cheerfully assent. "Come, Miss Doris," said he, and helped her out, standing her upon one of the rocks, which, overlapping each other, extend along the shores of Cape Violet. Truax scrambled after her, leaving his boat to Simon. Each looked in the other's face as they met. His hand closed tightly over hers; but he did not speak until they were well up the beach, where they sat down under the bluish shadow of a rocky wall.

"So," said he, "you were expecting me?"

"Expecting you?" repeated Doris bewildered. "Oh, no!"

"Perhaps not to-day, but one of these days. When you saw me you said to yourself, 'There he is at last.'"

Doris laughed.

"No: what I said to myself was, 'I wonder if we have luncheon enough for three.'"

Truax shook his head. Now that he was with her he almost wondered at his own happiness. How bewitching she was in her old blue dress, her wide-brimmed hat tied down with a ribbon, and her yellow hair in two loose-meshed, glittering braids.

"Child," said he ardently, "tell me you are glad to see me."

"Of course I am very glad to see you."

Truax found it difficult to take his eyes from her; but Simon, with a basket in one hand and his shoes

and stockings in the other, his bare feet fastening silently and surely on the stones, was advancing towards them.

"How did you happen to find us?" inquired Doris. "We set out for Cape Ardent; but the wind shifted to the south, and Simon was afraid we could not get back. We stopped for a while to fish, but hadn't a bite."

She did not wait for an answer. Simon had brought the lunch-basket, and she constituted herself mistress of ceremonies with a cheerful air. It was a very pretty spot: on one hand, high frowning cliffs stretched away towards the cape; and, on the other, the narrow rocky cove opened gradually towards the illimitable ocean waste. Many of the rocks were covered with seaweed, which took on fantastic shapes and colors in the light.

Truax finished his luncheon, and lay back with an air of indolent enjoyment, sifting the fine white sand which filled every crevice of the rocks from one hand to the other. Doris talked to him about the season and the weather, and showed him the deep veinings in the rocks worn by the waters in all the rains and high tides of the centuries.

"Simon," he called suddenly, "what is that sort of trellised cottage near the light-house?"

Simon, who was eating his own share of the meal half way down the beach, transferred his attention with plenty of alacrity to the place indicated.

"That," he replied, "is Cap'n Sands's 'Sailors Rest.'"

"I dare say a man may find a very good glass of beer there."

"The beer is good," Simon rejoined in a judicial tone.

"Go up and drink my health," said Truax, flinging him some coins.

"It would do you good, sir, to stretch your own legs. A glass of beer is a cool thing on a hot day like this."

"No, you go, my man. I'll take your word for the beer."

"All right, sir, on deck," Simon returned, saluting, and went slowly up the precipitous path which led to the light-house. Presently he had vanished. Overhead two or three large birds sailed to and fro, now and then flapping their wings. The waves at the base of the rocky wall lisped like children.

Doris leaned her head upon her hand, hiding the pink cheek towards Truax.

"I feel," said he, speaking reluctantly and drowsily, "as if I were in a dream."

"You ought to have gone with Simon," said Doris. "A glass of beer might do you good. I could sit here alone. I have sat here and waited for Simon many a time."

"Perhaps he may drink too much beer."

"He always does."

"Does he take you safely home afterwards?"

"Do not tremble. I can manage the boat almost as well as Simon."

"I am not afraid. And, under certain circum-

stances, I can fancy it might be a pleasant end to this day to go to pieces on the reef."

"Under what circumstances?"

He moved a little nearer to her.

"Doris," he exclaimed, "look at me."

She turned, smiling but shy, and gazed at him frankly.

"You look very happy," said she.

"I am happy. I am indescribably happy. Not so happy, however, as I expect to be shortly."

"Ah!"

"Ever since February," he went on, "I have been living by rule. I have held myself in rigid bonds. Doris, this liberation is sweet."

She still answered his look with a clear, lovely glance; but her color gradually heightened.

"Did you know she was married?" he asked.

"Who?" Doris demanded piquantly.

He was not repulsed. A certain rosy eagerness to keep herself calm and self-possessed was made quite apparent.

"She threw me over," he said: "she would have nothing more to say to me; she experimented on me, as it were, — decided I was a dangerous character, so took a safer man. Ford deserved her: I did not."

"You are very magnanimous."

Truax looked at her, smiling. She could no longer meet his eyes. Several moments passed without either of them saying a word. He could not gaze enough at her drooping side-face, her shining hair, her little hands crossed on her lap.

"I am so glad," he remarked at length, "that I found you just as you are to-day. "I was afraid you might have brought back some wicked arts, and spoiled all this sea-side life. Water-witch! Lorelei! nix!" he murmured, dropping one name after another into her ear with a little rankling whisper which made her drooping eyes hide still more, and her rosy cheeks grow rosier. "I expect every moment to be lured under the sea, and be forced to live with you in a palace of glass."

"Don't fear," retorted Doris, her little head haughty and erect once more. "I have no intentions towards a damp, sloppy, uncomfortable existence like that."

"On the contrary, I hear you are going to Paris."

"Yes: is it not delightful? I am going with my uncle in the autumn."

He looked at her gravely.

"I should feel an immense unwillingness to have you go anywhere in the world without me."

He took up her hands, clasped them a moment: then, with their palms upturned, he kissed them each. She was trembling: she was trembling all over.

"Doris," he cried in a suppressed tone, "may I not believe that you love me a little?"

She kept her face persistently turned from him. She was almost hidden now by her great hat; and he could see only the white, slender throat, and the little ear.

"Doris!" he cried, "why will you not look at me?"

She turned, and looked shyly up: she had grown pale; there was no longer any smile on her face.

"Don't you believe in me? Do you still doubt me?" he asked vehemently. "You may have seen cause. I acted once without my heart's being stirred. I had a lesson, — ah, such a lesson! But now, Doris, Doris, if there is any truth in earth or in heaven, I love you passionately, I love you tenderly."

Her face dazzled him. He had never seen such beauty there before. Still he did not read consent in the eyes which puzzled and tormented and threatened him.

"What can I do," he cried, almost beside himself, "to convince you of my sincerity? I" — He broke off, looked in her face, which suddenly lighted with a radiant smile. He drew her to him. "Can I — Is it possible you dream of loving me?"

"I seem to dream nothing else," returned Doris.

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The two were talking eagerly, smiling, exchanging glances which spoke a language forcible, novel, and strangely sweet, when a heavy step was heard beside them.

"Miss Doris," exclaimed Simon indignantly, "one would think, — ay, I might say one must think — There be your feet in two inches of water this minute."

For time had passed; the tide had risen.

THE END.

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